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EASTWARD TO PERSIA



HIS MAJESTY RIZA SHAH PAHLAVI, KING OF PERSIA

Frontispiece]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

EASTWARD TO PERSIA

BY
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AUTHOR OF

“AFGHANISTAN OF THE AFGHANS” AND “WESTWARD TO MECCA,” ETC.

WITH A FOREWORD BY

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PREFACE

THE LITERATURE on Persia in the English language is growing, but nothing has, so far, been written which could embrace the description of the many intimate facets of Persian life. To such only an Oriental may have an *entrée*. There are, for instance, books on Persian history, also narratives published by European travellers; but this is a book with a difference.

In it I have endeavoured to deal with those Persian conditions of life and labour which do not lie on the surface of things; that is, their human implications. The guiding principle being to interpret the hoary East to the hurrying West in the proper light in which Asiatic mystery might be revealed to the Europeans. I am anxious to give a glimpse into the mind of a race, whose history is older and richer in high traditions than many would care to own.

In order to show the living, pulsating drama of to-day's Persian life, it was thought necessary to provide an historical background of the glorious chronicles of that country. Besides, it serves another very useful purpose, which generally escapes the attention of many readers of Oriental history. And

it is this: as one reads the account of the ebb and flow of Persian power throughout the ages, one notices that in the evolution of history whatever has happened in the fair land of Omar, the Tent Maker, is merely a repetition of that which has occurred in other parts of the world. But it is just here that the difference is to be noted.

In Persian history, we find that ever since there was a kingdom in that country—and Persia had a mighty power and culture when others in Europe still wore skins and tattooed their bodies—the people of that country had never remained under the foreign yoke for long, even when their prestige was not at its zenith. Other people invaded the country, ruled over it, but were never successful in stamping out her old traditions, arts, crafts or language. And when the storm was over, Persia came to her own. Her glory was not tarnished for long; thus retaining almost an uninterrupted freedom of nationhood for thousands of years. I know of no other instance in the history of man, where a nation had remained independent so continually, and present-day conditions as I have seen them assure me that this fact of Persian history will not see a change.

But radiant as the future of Persia assuredly is, it nevertheless is patent that with the oncoming of the Western impact into the hidden recesses of Old Asia, more is to be known of Europe; and Europe is to know and understand a great deal more about

Persia, so that the cause of world-peace might be properly served. Hitherto, our difficulties—and I write as an Oriental student of high policy of world affairs—in the past both in the East and the West, have been that we did not understand each other. Like the primeval men we did not like those whom we did not understand, and as the means at our disposal to understand each other were inadequate, our likings for other folks were circumscribed; out of this crept dark suspicions, estrangements, and not infrequently even wars.

This book seeks to slay the dragon of misunderstandings, to wipe out the wicked and un-Islamic ideas that every white man is planning to usurp the freedom of this or that Asiatic country, and that every Oriental who shows friendliness towards a European can be no other than a spy. Unfortunately such ideas still linger. I have, therefore, no better desire than to present to my readers the human element in those simple, loveable people of Persia, and to show that although living in a different clime, speaking a different language, they are withal full just of those human passions of love and hate, as you and I; and are, therefore, quite friendly beings, if we could break the barriers. My appeal in this book is directed to the vast numbers of intelligent readers of books, who wish to be friendly with other folks, and not stand in “splendid isolation”, the world is now too interdependent for that attitude.

Above all this is not a reference book, the libraries are full of them. It is a simple human story.

The work, for quite obvious reasons, has its limitations, even errors. It should be so. A mere, frail man's work is contrasted only by its limitations from God's work. But if I have succeeded in interesting my readers in the subject of the Persian lore, in the living picture of a worthy people, then my labours are amply rewarded; for the rest, a Faithful can only hope from Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

AL FAQIR,
SYED IQBAL.

Tehran

FOREWORD

BY

HIS HIGHNESS SIR AGHA SULTAN MOHAMED SHAH
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BETTER KNOWN IN EUROPE AS
THE AGA KHAN

AT THE height of its civilisation and glory there were many distinguished Moslems of learning, who visited every part of the Islamic world, and wrote books of travel that have remained classics even to this day.

One of the signs of the renaissance of learning and art in the East is the fact that men like Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah have travelled over such little-known countries as Afghanistan, Arabia and Persia, and are now writing books of travel which will differ from those of Western scholars by their angle of vision.

It is a well-known fact that works of art are differently interpreted by experts from the East or West. The same applies to the culture, habits and institutions of countries.

For these reasons, I think Sirdar Ikbāl Ali Shāh's books—and especially this latest book on Persia—should be read by those in the West who want to see the East through Oriental eyes.

AGA KHAN.

London,

8th Dec., 1930.

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EASTWARD TO PERSIA

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF PERSIA

PERSIA the "Land of the Lion and the Sun"—the *Pars* or *Fars* of Ezekiel, styled by the people of that country as *Iran*—occupies the western and larger portion of the great plateau that stretches south-westward from the Pamirs to the Persian Gulf and Tigris basin. Its estimated area is 630,000 square miles. Persia is, by geographical position, a meeting-ground of antagonistic political and commercial interests. The Caspian Sea, which, with Soviet territory, forms the northern boundary of Persia, is wholly under Muscovite influence. The Persian Gulf on the South and Iraq on the south-west is dominated by Great Britain. On the eastern border lies Afghanistan, while to the north-west lie Armenia and Kurdistan, abutting on the Turkish Empire.

The greater part of Persia is a tableland from 4,000 to 8,000 feet in elevation, encircled, except on

the east, by mountains. On the north the Elburz range, a spur of the Caucasus Mountains, marks the frontier with a line of bold, steep peaks, and parallels the shore of the Caspian Sea for miles. The general level of these peaks is 12,000 feet, the highest, Mt. Demavand, reaching an altitude of more than 18,000 feet. Two off-shoots of the Elburz are the Savalandagh, in Azerbaijan, and the Zagros range, the latter passing along the western border of the tableland. On the south, the plateau is separated from the Persian Gulf by several parallel ridges crossed by rocky valleys. Spurs from these ranges extend across the plateau, and between them there are wide plains, and here and there fertile valleys, but the central and eastern parts of the tableland are little more than a salt desert on which there are oases, that are tilled and inhabited, it is true, but these are few and of limited area. The southern part of Persia is a burning waste of sand throughout nearly its whole vast extent.

The greater part of Persia depends wholly for its irrigation upon the mountains, which gather rain and snow, for this vast country is unusually devoid of rivers. In the northern part, a number of streams flow from the Elburz heights into the Caspian Sea, but all are so short that they are little more than mountain torrents. The only rivers of any extent in the entire country are two branches of the Tigris, the Karun, whose headwaters are in the Bakhtiari

range, and the Kerkha, flowing from the Kurdistan mountains. Practically the only navigable river is the Karun, on which steamers can ascend to Shuster.

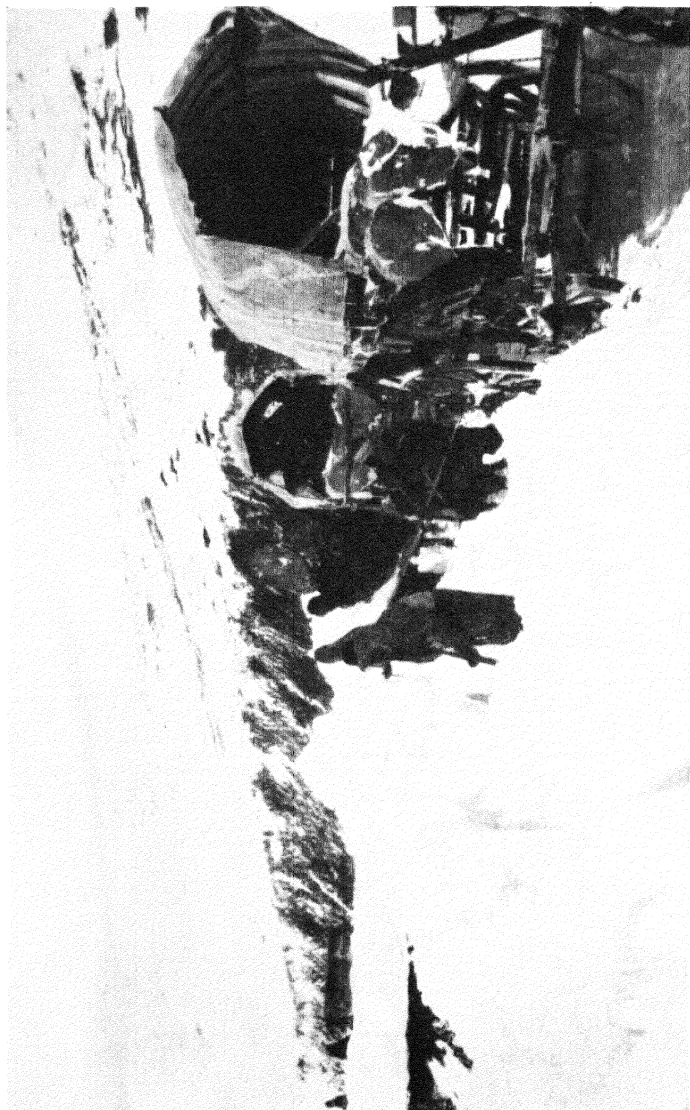
There are many separate drainage areas in the country. About 130,000 square miles along the sea and Persian Gulf empty directly into those waters, while another area, comprising 100,000 square miles, drains into the Caspian and Aral in the north. Lake Urumia, in the north-west, and Lake Seistan, near the eastern border, serve to drain about 60,000 square miles. But besides these, which include about one half the area of the country, there is an immense interior region, including the Great Salt Desert, whose scanty water supply passes into small swamps or lakes or else disappears in the desert sand. The salt swamps of Persia are interesting features of its physiography. They are bogs of slimy mud, formed at the lower levels by the interior drainage areas. Where the amount of surface drainage is too small to form a lake there exists a swamp, which fills or dries with the seasons. In winter the rainfall may flood the region, but in summer the traveller finds a vast wilderness of barren salt-covered plains dotted with mud-flats. The Great Salt Desert is a vast swamp area of this kind.

The climate varies according to latitude and elevation. In the northern districts, near the Caspian, rain is frequent. As a result the summers are excessively warm and disagreeable, because of the humidity,

while the winters are damp and cold. On the Iranian plateau the air is very dry. Here, on account of the elevation, the winters are intensely cold, but yet bearable to persons from temperate latitudes. The summers are warm, dry, and pleasant. In the lower plains of the south and east the winters are agreeable, but the summers are parching with their intense heat. Inhabitants sleep in the open air, using the house-tops for that purpose, in the cities.

The fauna includes the tiger, lion, leopard, lynx, wolf, jackal, wild ass, wild sheep, deer, partridge, grouse, and bustard. Domestic animals include horses, mules, and camels for transportation and oxen for tilling. The so-called Arab steed of the Persian Gulf region is not pure Arab, but is a serviceable animal of some reputation. The horses bred by the Turkomans of Khurasan are capable of great endurance. The breeders of Khurasan have also developed a special breed of draught camel that is deemed valuable in oriental countries.

Persia has a productive soil, except in the areas of the salt-swamps, but the lack of irrigation has made unproductive wastes of much really good land. Where cultivation has been developed by labour, wheat, barley and other cereals have been excellent, while sugar-cane and rice flourish in the watered areas. Generally speaking, however, the crops that require least water have been most popular among Persian cultivators. Opium, cotton, and tobacco are



PONY CARTS TRANSPORTING WHEAT THROUGH SNOW-BOUND PERSIAN PASSES

grown in certain districts in quantities sufficient for export. In Ghilan, south-west of the Caspian, are famous mulberry orchards grown for silk culture. Tea plantations have been started in the same district with promising results. Persian wines have an excellent reputation, and vineyards are abundant, but the product is chiefly for local consumption. Fruits are grown in variety and abundance, and form no small part of the food of the people. There is no question that scientific irrigation and good roads would enable Persian products to enter the markets of the world with marked success.

The lowland strip along the Caspian Sea is covered with forests of oak, beech, birch, elm, walnut, sycamore and ash, but these timber areas have no commercial importance as yet. Application of scientific methods might also develop the mineral products of Persia, such as salt, iron, coal, copper, lead, antimony, sulphur and marble. Something has certainly been done by the British in developing the petroleum wells in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf. The pearl-fishing industry in the Persian Gulf, centred chiefly at Bahrein and Lingha, is the most valuable in the world.

The Persians manufacture silks, rugs, and carpets; they excel in their dyes, and in their brocade and embroidery. Persian carpets, too, have distinctive features, varying with the districts in which they are made. Kurdistan, Khurasan, Feraghan, and Kerman

produce excellent examples of hand work, often employing whole families for long periods of time. No two carpets are exactly alike in design. Another industry, especially in Kerman, is the manufacture of shawls woven by hand of goats' wool. Ispahan and Yezd are famed for their *nomads* or heavy woollen felts. Other manufactures include cotton and woollen fabrics, ornamental swords, brass and copper vessels, carved and inlaid work of metal and wood.

The population is estimated about ten million. The people are divided into two great classes, dwellers in towns or villages and nomads or dwellers in tents. The latter include Arabs, Kurds, Lurs, Gypsies, and Turks. Of the population about ninety per cent are Mohammedans of the Shiah sect. The Persian has naturally a higher order of physical and mental endowment, and is less a slave to custom than the Turk, but the priesthood, or "ulema," is very powerful and so conservative as seriously to restrict progress.

The cities of Persia are, as a rule, poorly-built, with narrow, ill-paved streets. Tehran, which has an estimated population of 220,000, became the capital in 1788. It is on a river-less plain at the southern foot of the Elburz Range, about seventy miles from the Caspian Sea. Tabriz, with a population of about 220,000, in the north-west, near the Turkish and Soviet frontiers, is the commercial metropolis. Ispahan, with about 90,000 inhabitants, the former capital, stands in a fertile plain in the centre of the

country, and is the second commercial city. Mesthed, containing about 75,000 inhabitants, is the capital of Khurasan, and a place of pilgrimage, being one of the holy cities of the Moslem faith. Yezed (45,000), in the centre of the country, is the chief seat of the Parsees and Guebers. Kerman (70,000), in the interior, is a meeting place of trade routes between the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. Shiraz, in the southwest, is traditionally famed for its roses, wines and nightingales.

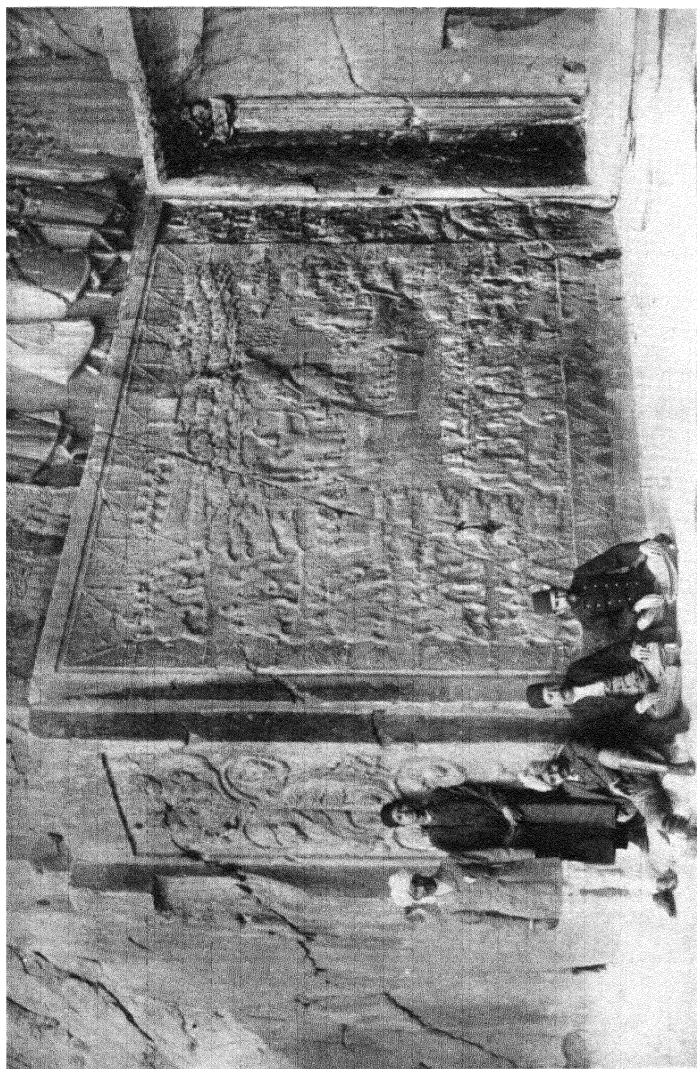
CHAPTER II
EARLY HISTORY OF PERSIA

MEDES: 708-550 B.C.

DEIOCES

IT IS on no less an authority than of Herodotus himself we have that Deioces had so greatly established his reputation of justice and uprightness that not only his village folk but also people of various clans brought their disputes before him to be settled. But Deioces, finding this dispensing of justice take too much of his time, whereby his own sphere of work suffered, refused to continue it. The affairs of men lapsed into chaos in consequence, and the Medes thereupon invited Deioces to become their King.

On ascending the throne Deioces chose Hamadan or the Greek Ecbatana as his capital and raised a powerful force of body-guards. This city stood on the Musalla hill on the east of the present town. It was surrounded by seven concentric walls which rose progressively in height to the innermost. Like the Birs Nimrud of the Babylonians these were painted



ANCIENT ROCK CARVING IN SOUTHERN PERSIA

in bright colours, but they did not symbolize the planets. No one could approach the King, and all applications had to be sent through messengers.

Deioces, who ruled for fifty-three years (708-655 B.C.), did much to concentrate the various units of the Medes, and the country flourished because a tribute to the Assyrians was regularly paid, and justice was meted out to his subjects in strict obedience to the laws of the clans. But when his son, Phraortes, succeeded him he attacked the Assyrians unsuccessfully, and after a reign of twenty-two years was killed in 633 B.C. Cyaxares, who succeeded Phraortes, was not slow in recognizing the futility of going to battle against the Assyrians, when his army was composed of irregular troops chiefly gathered from his feudal chiefs. It lacked the cohesion of the well-disciplined standing army of the Assyrians. He therefore organized units of infantry with bows and swords. But his cavalry was his pride, because they could shoot both charging and retiring, a feat which proved too formidable even to the Roman warriors. Having so well trained his army he defeated Assurbanipal's general and besieged Nineveh. An invasion of the Scythians into his own country compelled him to retire.

Crossing the Darband Pass, the Scythians were already in Azerbaijan when the Median King gave them battle near Lake Urmia but was defeated in 633 B.C. and had to accept the terms of the invaders.

After ravaging the country, the Scythian hordes marched triumphantly right up to the shores of the Mediterranean. For twenty-eight years they held sway over Medes, till Cyaxares one night invited the Scythian chiefs to a feast, and, having made them drunk, put them to death; then, attacking their rank and file, he drove them out of the country.

When Nabopolassar, after the death of Assurbani-pal, had proclaimed himself as the King of Babylonia, he resolved to attack Assyria with the help of the Medes. Cyaxares gladly joined. Their joint armies reduced the country, razed Nineveh to the ground in 606, and the defeated Assyrian King threw himself in a pyre. Nebuchadnezzar, Nabopolassar's son, upon succeeding his father, cemented a blood tie with the Medes by marrying the daughter of Cyaxares. The Medes at that time ruled over practically the whole Iranian plateau, to which Armenia was also joined. Cyaxares, however, wished to extend his dominions further west, and here he came in collision with the great soldiers of Lydia. For six years the Medes and the Lydians fought against each other without either side gaining very much, till on the 28th May, 585, the eclipse of the sun so frightened both parties that they ceased hostilities, and accepted the friendly intervention of the Babylonians by agreeing to the Halys as the Western boundary of the Medes.

A year after this campaign Cyaxares died, leaving a most remarkable record of administrative and milit-

ary achievements. In his time he had organized an army, had expelled the Scythians, had materially assisted in the taking of Nineveh, and had annexed to his domain nearly half of Asia Minor. It is to be expected that the legacy of his life's endeavour should be a rich one, for his successor Astyagas, had a very peaceful and prosperous reign. Both the pageantry of the Assyrian Court's etiquette, and the gorgeous robes of red and purple figured very prominently at the great receptions given by the King of the Medes. The kingdom of the Medes, however, crumbled in 550 before the mighty blow of Cyrus, who led the Persians.

THE PERSIANS

Persian history, however, really begins with the advent of Hakhamanish, one of the ten clans of an Aryan family who, migrating down from the Parsua hills, had made their home amongst the Ashanites; and ultimately had become the rulers of Ashan. It is in this rôle that Cyrus challenged and defeated the last King of the Medes. In 546 B.C. he was officially styled as the King of Persia. When Cyrus was fighting the Medes, the Lydians, having annexed the Greek Colonies of Asia Minor, were rapidly conquering the country eastwards; indeed under Cræsus they had already nearly reached the Halys. The Lydian monarch, having been alarmed by the success of the new King of Persia, resolved to attack Cyrus

before he had time to consolidate his power. But Cyrus proposed to attack the Lydians first.

The forced marches of the Persians surprised Cræsus. The first battle was more or less favourable to the Lydians, but ultimately the Persians triumphed, and Cræsus retired laying waste the country as his army retreated. Cyrus pushed on with all speed behind the Lydians towards Sardis, where a decisive victory was won by the fact that the Persian camel corps frightened the horses of the Lydian cavalry. Sardis fell in 546 B.C., and Cræsus was taken captive. By degrees the Greeks of Iona were also brought under Persian subjection, and thus Cyrus established a connection with Hellas. For a few years after subduing Lydia the Persians were engaged in either quelling local revolt in Iran, or punishing recalcitrant tribes in the Eastern part of their country.

Cyrus next turned his attention to Babylonia, where Nabonidas, the son of a priestess, appeared to be more interested in archæology than the affairs of his State, and was completely in the hands of the priests. By one of the most remarkable feats of early engineering the Persians were able to divert the courses of the Tigris and Diyala to facilitate the crossing of the troops on their march to Babylon. The two armies met at Opis where the chief force of the Babylonian army had been concentrated, and it resulted in a crushing defeat of the Babylonians. Cyrus entered the city in 538, where he was hailed as a deliverer.

It was nine years after the conquest of Babylonia that Cyrus, when driving the Central Asian invaders out of his country, fell in a battle and was buried at Pasargadæ. He is justifiably reputed to be one of the greatest Persian heroes, for during his reign he carved out an empire for himself by conquering the Medes, Babylonians, Lydians, and was planning to attack Egypt.

CAMBYSES

Cyrus was succeeded by Cambyses, who embarked upon the Egyptian campaign, and after overcoming many transport difficulties defeated the Egyptians at Pelusium, and then reduced Memphis, which meant complete victory to the Persian arms. At the death of Cambyses in 521 B.C., the Persian Empire was the greatest known in the world's history. From Sir Darya in the east it terminated at the Nile in the west, and extended from the Persian Gulf to the shores of the Black Sea.

Darius, after slaying the impostor Gaumata, who had succeeded Cambyses, became King of Persia but found the Empire in revolt against him. His administrative ability, however, soon began to make his power as a ruler manifest, for, being aware of the intention of the governors of the provinces to set up independent principalities for themselves, he subordinated them by a General and a Secretary of State who were directly answerable to the King. The departments of

justice and assessment were also thoroughly overhauled, so that with peace in the country, the revenue swelled to about three and a half million pounds sterling. In that period of World economics this sum was considered to be very great indeed. The gold coins of Darius, called Darics, were, curious to relate, weight by weight equal to the British gold coin of to-day.

Amongst other reforms, his organization of the army is considered of some importance, but judged from the present point of view it was not free of faults, because it was composed of various units at variance alike in language, equipment and training, and thus lacked cohesion. But, realizing the necessity of linking the various points of the Empire together, he caused a road to be built from Susa to Sardis, in Lydia, a distance of approximately 1,500 miles.

His military exploits were first directed towards the conquest of Russia, but although he annexed Thrace and subdued Macedonia he had to call a halt at the Danube. In Asia he subjugated a portion of Sind and the Punjab, but did not succeed against the Hellas. He died in 485 B.C., being ranked as great an administrator as Cyrus was a military genius.

Xerxes, who succeeded Darius, was not the man to live up to the glorious traditions of his ancestors, for he was weak and pleasure loving. Finding him reluctant at first to undertake the campaign against Hellas, Mardonius, a relation, insisted that the prestige of

Persia could only be upheld by a war against the Greeks. The mighty preparations of the Persian army for this attack, as well as the various scenes of battle, notably at Salamis, is a romantic war history. Leaving Mardonius at the head of the Persian army, Xerxes retired to his distant capital, but Hellas defeated him at Plataea in 479 B.C. and thus delivered a severe blow to Persian suzerainty in Asia Minor.

But although Xerxes had so ingloriously conducted this campaign against the Greeks, it is by no means to be contended that the Persian defeat had negated the power which they held through the length and breadth of Asia, the victory of Hellas notwithstanding, for when the Egyptians, assisted by the Greeks, rose in rebellion in 460 B.C. the Persians were sufficiently powerful not only to crush the rebellion but to deal very effectively with the instigators.

In about the year 400 B.C., Cyrus the Younger headed an insurrection near Sardes against his brother Artaxerxes Mnemon, the Persian King. Crossing Asia Minor, he met with no opposition till he reached the region of Babylonia, where, in a battle against Cyrus, he was killed, and his Greek soldiers were permitted to return home. The decline of the Great Persian Empire was rapid on the death of Artaxerxes and when the last of the Achæmenian Kings, Darius Codomanus, ascended the throne in 336 B.C. the mighty empire had seen its last, for Alexander was preparing for the conquest of the known world.

ALEXANDER'S CONQUEST OF PERSIA

Mustering some 30,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, Alexander started on his conquest of Asia in 334 B.C. The Persians stood in his way to the hegemony of the East, and their Empire he determined to overthrow. He found no opposition during his march through Thrace, and garrisoning Sestos on the European side and Abydos he advanced till he met the Persian army, composed of both the Greek infantry and Persian cavalry, at the banks of the Granicus. After an appalling carnage, Alexander won and occupied Sardes. The capture of Greek cities along the coast of Asia Minor was but the natural outcome of the Persian defeat; specially was this of value because the death of the great Persian naval commander Mnemon deprived his countrymen of the advantage of using the western shores of Asia Minor as a naval base, and thus a threat to the rear of Alexander's army was removed. The Macedonians were agreeably surprised to find that even the Cilician Gates were not defended, but a large number of Persian troops had been gathered to meet the invaders near the Gulf of Iskanderun.

In the Persian army which faced Alexander there were no less than 30,000 Greek mercenaries, nearly equal to the whole force of the Macedonians; and despite their wonderful courage Darius was defeated and fled to Persia. Later, Alexander besieged and

finally took Tyre; and, completing this Near Eastern campaign by annexing Egypt, he marched triumphantly across the plains watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates till, at Arbela, the Persian army met the conquering army, but was defeated, and both Babylon and Susa lay at Alexander's feet. When Darius had taken refuge at Ecbatana, the Macedonians occupied Persepolis and sacked it. After a feeble attempt at defence, Darius fled to Meshed, where he was assassinated by his own governor; and thus ended the glory of the Achæmenian dynasty that had presided over the destinies of Asia for over two centuries.

After the conquest of Persia, Alexander advanced towards Herat, zig-zagged his way from Seistan to Kandahar, in Afghanistan, and then up to the north to Balkh, the capital of Bactria. Further north still, crossing the river Oxus, he founded the city of Khojand, in Central Asia. Thence he marched India-ward where, on the crossing of Jehlum, his battle against Porus is world-famous.

His decisive victory induced him to progress into the Punjab, but his army was weary and longed to return home. The course adopted by Alexander for the return was by means of a fleet which negotiated the rivers Jehlum and Indus down to the Arabian Sea. When his troops landed on the Makran coast, the desert of Baluchistan was found to be extremely difficult marching during that time of the year, and thousands perished on the way before arriving at

Susa, where the return of the warriors occasioned general rejoicing, as it marked the termination of one of the greatest military triumphs in the history of the world.

Soon after, Alexander died at the age of thirty-two. His conquests differed from his predecessors in the sense that he was able to hold the provinces which he had annexed. But the wars of "Successors" amongst the generals of Alexander that followed his death are sufficient indication that it was the personality of this Macedonian hero alone which checked the ambitions of his generals, for the common good of the Greek civilization. The only power worthy of the name that resembled the greatness of Alexander's day was that of Babylon under Seleucus whose house ruled that country for two hundred years after the death of the Great Conqueror. The rest all perished in the course of time, although the Greeks ruled over Bactria for some generations.

THE EMPIRE OF THE PARTHIANS

The Religion of Parthia

So little that is authentic is known of the religion of the virile and interesting people of Parthia, who checked the Roman power and carved out for themselves an extensive empire in the Near East, that at the first glance it may seem even a little presumptuous to make the subject the title of a chapter. But the

useful instrument of analogy has so frequently been employed with beneficial results in the case of faiths obscure and only partially chronicled, that it is now quite possible by its aid to marshal the evidence with respect to the Parthian cult in such a manner that a more or less coherent account of it can be offered without the risk of committing more than trivial errors. The value of such a study may not at once be obvious, but, as the results indicate, the faith of the people who imposed their rule on the vast tract between India and Armenia could not but hold elements of interest and value not only for the student of religion and history, but for the many who have personal knowledge of that region, and for the further good reason that, as divulged in part, it reveals itself as a strange religious link between East and West, at certain periods amalgamating nature-worship with Zoroastrianism, at others relapsing entirely to its more primitive type.

The earliest home of the Parthian people was situated at the south-eastern corner of the Caspian Sea, and south of the narrow mountain range which joins the Elburz system with that of the Hindu Kush. This region, stretching for about 300 miles, and embracing an area of perhaps 33,000 square miles, or almost that of Ireland, is rich and productive, broken up into warm latitudinal valleys, well-wooded and irrigated by rivers of some magnitude. But the locality which seems to have supported the bulk of

the Parthian population was the region of Atak, or the "fringe," a low-lying fertile belt at the foot of the hills and contiguous to the desert on the south. Here the remains of large cities are still numerous and easily recognizable; even the desiccation consequent upon the extreme dryness and heat of the plain country has failed to reduce them altogether to dust.

Out of this fatherland the Parthians marched to the conquest of the neighbouring regions, reducing Hyrcania, Media, Bactria, Elam, Susidna, Babylonia and Persia, Assyria, and a number of lesser states and principalities. Thus, at the apogee of its power, the Parthian Empire extended fully two thousand miles from east to west between the uplands of the Pamirs and the Euphrates, while it had a general width of about five or six hundred miles between its northern and southern frontiers. It included the modern countries of Persia, Afghanistan, much of Turkey-in-Asia and a considerable portion of Southern Russia, in all a territory of about 800,000 square miles.

The Parthians were a people of what was known formerly as "Turanian" or Central-Asiatic stock, that is, they had a semi-Mongolian origin, and in this respect were related to the Huns, Avars, Tatars, Turks, Kalmucks and Usbeks. It is, indeed, this circumstance which, more than any other, assists us to obtain light upon their religious ideas. They do not appear in history until the time of Darius the son of Hystaspes (that is, about 520 B.C.) who alludes

to them on the Behistun inscription as "Parthva" and as in a state of revolt. During the Achæmenian period, which ended in 330 B.C., they seem to have remained faithful Persian subjects. On the conquest of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great they do not seem to have offered any particular resistance, and subsequently they became merged with Syria in the composite kingdom of the Seleucidæ, created by Seleucus, Alexander's most famous general. This definitely brought them under Hellenic influence, which, indeed, they never altogether shook off in a cultural sense, although they certainly abhorred it. About 250 B.C., they cast aside the Seleucid yoke, and under a succession of able monarchs, among whom the most outstanding was Mithridates I, embarked on that policy of conquest which so greatly enlarged their boundaries, and which has already been described.

The type of government prevailing in Parthia appears to have been based on patriarchal notions of tribalism. The King was appointed by election, and was supported by a council of clan chieftains, to whose number were added representatives from the *Sophi*, or wise men, and the Magi, or priests, the ruling caste being commonly known as Megestanes, or Nobles. The deliberations of this senate seem to have been confined chiefly to warlike and colonial affairs, and, so far as the first department was concerned, with the conspicuous success which almost

invariably attended the efforts of "Turanian" peoples in military organization. It was in the time of Mithridates II that Parthia as a power first came into contact with the Roman Empire, about the beginning, that is, of the first century B.C., when the Latin power cast covetous eyes on the declining throne of the Kings of Pergamus. Disturbance in Parthia followed the death of Mithridates II, and a dark period supervened. It was in the prefecture of Crassus, who governed Syria, that the first clash came. On the banks of the Belik, Crassus was signally defeated by the superior tactics of the Parthian cavalry and archers, with the loss of nearly 30,000 men. Again and again Parthian generals scored decisive successes against the Romans, and it was not until the campaign of Ventidius in 39 B.C. that the tide began to turn. Even after that time Mark Antony led an expedition against Parthia which ended in failure.

But internal trouble and revolution gradually weakened the Parthian monarchy, tyrants and pretenders arose, and a long list of assassinations deprived the country of adequate leadership. More amicable relations with Rome were established, however, until the invasion of Parthia by Trajan in A.D. 115. Besieging Hatra, he was repulsed, relinquished the investment, and retired, to die in Cilicia. Chosroes, the Parthian King, and Hadrian entered into friendly relationship. But Rome was not to be

denied, and under Severus, returned to the assault. Finally, in the reign of Macrinus, in A.D. 217, Parthia was forced to purchase a peace. But the Persian province, always malcontent under Parthian government, revolted; difficulties at home and abroad multiplied upon the unhappy head of Artavasdes, the last of the Parthian Kings, and the Empire, which had lasted for five centuries, finally crashed to ruin in the year A.D. 227. It had been the rather tyrannical hegemony of a Tartar or Turki race over a mingled population of Aryan and Semitic peoples, more civilized than their governors, loose in administrative organization, stiff and decidedly bureaucratic. Yet it had succeeded in warding off the barbarous races of Northern Asia and Scythia more by dint of martial prowess than good guidance, and chiefly through the active policy of a long line of able and vigorous rulers.

As has been said, the racial affinities of the Parthians will probably aid us to a better comprehension of their religious condition than any mere review of such evidences of this as we possess. The records relating to it describe it in its original and pristine form as a solar and lunar cult, accompanied by a species of ancestor-worship. The great luminaries were thought of as presiding over the fortunes of the royal house, while every family cherished its own lares and penates, or ancestral gods, who were represented by idols. The sun-god was popularly worshipped in the temples, probably under the Aryan name of Mitra,

with sacrifices and offerings; and statues were erected in his honour. He was invariably associated with the moon, probably as a consort. Thus, while the royal deities were regarded as having a kind of national status, the familiar tribal or domestic gods retained the more intimate affections of the people.

Such a condition obviously points to a Shamanistic origin for the Parthian national faith. It is clear that it must have been developed gradually from that very ancient cult of Shamanism which all of the Central Asiatic peoples of Tartar origin cultivated. Shamanism was, in its beginnings, a cult of spiritism or animism, in which a priestly class, which may be broadly described as "witch-doctors," acted as intermediary between gods and people. It is closely associated with ancestor-worship, many of its divinities being the glorified dead, heroes or ancestors of especial wisdom or warlike celebrity. Together with this, it sometimes adopts a species of nature-worship—that of the sun-god, who illumines the great plains by day, and the moon, which presides over the long nights of the prairie desert.

We find the priests who presided over this faith localized in Parthia, described as Magi, or wise men, but this appears more as a generic title assumed from the Zoroastrian religion, which, as we shall see, was adopted by the Parthians at a later stage, than as any accurate definition of their original status. That the early Shamanism of Parthia was sophisticated by

Magian or Zoroastrian notions, precisely as British and Gallic Druidism were by Pythagorean and Mithraic ideas, to some extent, is certain, but that this altogether overlaid the popular faith is extremely unlikely. Almost to the last the Parthians seem to have cherished and practised the ancient tribal cult of their nomadic ancestors, which, indeed, appears to have had affinities with the Urim and Thummim of the Hebrew and Palestinian peoples. There was, indeed, a very considerable leaven of Semitic blood in the Parthian race, and how far this had a bearing upon their acceptance and preservation of domestic idol-worship it would be difficult to say. Indeed it seems more probable that Turanian influence upon Semitic practice may rather have been responsible for the appearance of family divinities in early Palestine and among the Hebrews than that the reverse was the case.

We observe the early Parthians, then, as a race newly-emerged from a nomadic, pastoral and patriarchal existence, entering upon settled agricultural life in a region entirely different from the Central Asiatic environment to which they had previously been accustomed, yet retaining the ancient faith to which generations of usage had bound them—a cult in which domestic idols, representative of their ancestors, took the position of familiar oracles, family totems, so to speak, who would advise them on the conduct of their daily affairs, visit them in dreams,

and act as guardian spirits in much the same manner as do the totems of the North American Indians. In such a condition, the paterfamilias almost invariably acts as a kind of unofficial priest, the vates of the domestic hearth.

But the need for a more generalized and national faith would by degrees become obvious, and this is precisely what occurred. Certain members of the community, or perhaps an entire clan, would in time assume a specialist religious office, as did the Levites among the Hebrews.

It was at this juncture that the Zoroastrian faith impinged upon the native beliefs of Parthia. Originating, probably, in Mitanni, on the Upper Euphrates, at some time in the fifteenth century B.C., it certainly affected the Hittite State, the names of Mitra and Varuna appearing in its documents in the fourteenth century. The Hittites, like the Parthians, appear to have been largely of Turkic or Tartar stock, and the possibility is that Aryan ideas seized upon this race at a comparatively early period. Be that as it may, by the time of Darius Hystaspes, towards the end of the fifth century B.C., the Persian power had certainly spread the worship of Ahura Mazda, the supreme god of the Zoroastrian faith, over the Near East.

We have no means of knowing precisely when the Persian faith imposed itself upon Parthia, but we do know that by the middle of the second century B.C. Parthia was ostensibly and officially Zoroastrian, and

that a Parthian King, Valkash, contemporary with that era, caused all that could be recovered of the Avesta, the sacred book of the Zoroastrian religion, to be collected and copied. But in all likelihood it was only as an official and not as a popular religion that the worship of Ahura Mazda was accepted in Parthia. Certain Parthian coins display figures of the Zoroastrian deities, and fire was held sacred. But in the course of time laxity set in. The fires of Ormuzd were allowed to go out in the temples, the religious respect for that element so entirely passed away, that, as Herodian tells us, the Parthians actually burned their dead. This would seem to indicate a certain recrudescence of Hellenic influence, which was really never altogether absent, the Parthians being particularly fond of the Greek drama, if not of Greek culture generally, and practising it as a public rite, if not with any religious significance, such as it had in Hellas.

To revert to the primitive faith of the Parthians and the possible penetration of it by Zoroastrianism, there is one locus to which we can appeal for evidence with considerable confidence. That is the ruins of the city and temple of Hatra, one of the principal centres of Parthian culture and religion. This city was circular in shape and about a mile in diameter. It was enclosed by a thick wall, and divided almost in half by a watercourse, the space to the west containing the temple, an edifice about 360 feet long by

210 feet broad at its most extreme width. It consisted of a series of seven oblong vaulted halls, placed side by side longitudinally, with smaller apartments at the back. The halls were of varying dimensions, the smaller measuring about 60 feet by 20, and the larger about 90 feet by 40, with a height of 60 feet. They were roofed by semicircular tunnel-vaults, and were all entirely open to the light and air in front.

The second of these halls was connected with a double rectangular chamber, over the doorway of which a frieze, delicately carved, bore certain figures and symbols which must be regarded as having been associated with the Parthian religion. Over a row of acanthus leaves was a line of emblematic figures—griffins, sphinxes, eagles, and human heads—all of which must necessarily have held some symbolic significance for the Parthian.

One of these is so clearly the head of the sun-god that not even the most grudging among archæologists could question the identity. From a clean-shaven human face surrounded by conventionally depicted hair springs a nimbus broken by rays, such as is still frequently employed as the head of the sun-god in emblematic drawings. That this is the Mitra of the Parthians, the solar deity borrowed from the Zoroastrian faith, we cannot doubt. A second head, with similarly arranged hair or wig, but surrounded by a pair of horns or leaves, almost as obviously represents the moon, and, indeed, bears a certain resem-

blance to the representations of the Egyptian god Amen, the lunar deity of the Nile. Flanking the head of the sun-god are a pair of eagles, each holding a crescent in its beak, probably a representation of the lunar phases, while at one side crouches a sphinx or griffin with the head of a bull between its claws.

The bull is, of course, the symbol of Mitra, and thus we find, in the frieze described, the full content of the Parthian official religion in emblematic form, the sun, the moon, the lunar phases and the idea of sacrifice, the latter delineated in a kind of rebus form by the sphinx or griffin grasping the bull's head. This is as much as to say that the Parthian religion consisted of a solar and lunar worship which had adopted certain aspects—probably very potent aspects—of Zoroastrianism or Mazdeism. In short it was a mythical and theological compromise.

We must also admit that the priesthood which raised this temple could not well have been developed from that which practised the simple rites of the earliest form of Parthian worship, otherwise the frieze in question would have had a very different appearance and have been embellished by an altogether different symbolism. The early form of Parthian religious practice must, from the very character of the race which founded it, have borne a close resemblance to that of early China, where ancestor-worship prevailed among the people, and the national rites were performed, not by any priestly class, but by a

minister of the Crown. This shows more eloquently than anything else could do the entirely fortuitous character of the Chinese official faith—that it had indeed arisen from a sentiment of the necessity for an official and national cult. The Shamanism or domestic idolatry of the populace could not stand alone. It required the support and balance of an associational as apart from an individual appeal to the supernatural powers, the loose and probably varied character of the worship paid them needed to be standardized and crystallized into a definite ritual, having a national significance.

Such a process must almost certainly have taken place in connection with the Parthian religion. Indeed the frieze at Hatra proves this almost beyond dispute. Here Shamanism was swallowed up in official ritualism.

And if an official ritual were required, was it not natural that the already fully matured Mazdeism of Bactria, a neighbouring state subject to the Parthian Empire, would supply the deficiency? Here was an "official" faith ready to hand, and that Parthia actually received it on such a basis we are fully assured by history. It must not only have supplied the felt want of functional religion, but it must also have afforded the model on which the later Parthian priesthood was planned.

This Mazdean or Zoroastrian priesthood, known to the Greeks as Magi, and from the pages of the

Avesta as Athravan, or "fire-priests," was a hereditary or Levitical caste, and its principal duty was the tending of the sacred fire. The Magi had portable altars for service in private houses, which goes to show that the popular Shamanism was in some measure forced to the acceptance of Zoroastrian rite. But there were also public fire shrines, in which the sacred flame was kept burning on an altar, or in a vase filled with incandescent ashes. Strabo tells us that the priests daily functioned before these altars, singing for an hour before the fire, carrying a bundle of twigs, and wearing a head-dress which covered their mouths. The shrine was constructed in such a manner as to keep the sunlight from falling on the fire, and dimming or extinguishing it. In short, such a building was prepared for its reception as we have seen the temple at Hatra to be.

This religion had as its supreme deity Ahura Mazda, the creator and sustainer, omniscient and beneficent, a spirit absolutely good and perfect. In opposition to him was the power of evil, Angra Mainyu, who, for each beneficent action of Ahura Mazda's created a corresponding ill. The sky, the luminaries therein, the earth, animals and plants were the work of Ahura Mazda, while Angra created cold, reptiles, plagues, witchcraft and vice. Man committed the error of believing that the Evil Spirit had created everything, and thus fell from grace, being doomed to fight constantly against the Evil until at last he recognized his

mistake and overcame it. Ahura created Vohu Mano or "good mind," a move which was countered by Angra with Aken Mano, or "evil mind," the corrupting mental influence. The Gold Age ended in a long and terrible winter, an Ice Age, which necessitated the building of a shelter for animals and plants, a terrestrial parallel to the Semitic ark.

Man became so brutal to the animals in his charge that Ahura Mazda sent Zoroaster to convert him to the doctrine of mercy. To fight the fiends of Angra, who cultivated cruelty in human minds, Zoroaster invented the apparatus of worship and the holy words, that is, a species of anti-demonic magic. The earth became a battle-field between the forces of good and evil, light and darkness, in which man took a part.

From the Avesta it is plain that the State Church of Zoroastrianism constituted an ecclesiastical hierarchy at the head of which was a metropolitan who had his centre in Rai, in Media. But provincial leaders existed in the cities and districts of the Near East. The entire cultus consisted of a dry and spiritless ritualism, the outcome of the practical genius of the Aryan race who founded it. A considerable portion of the practical religion consisted in the observance of the rites of clean and unclean, and in the purification necessary to repair any infraction of them. Unclean-ness was regarded as a demonic contagion, demons being regarded as the principal source of evil infections. Death was their sphere, and was definitely regarded

as the unnatural result of their influence—a very early type of belief, still common among barbarous and savage races. The cure for all kinds of contagious evil was the urine of the cow, the sacred animal of Mazdeism.

The morality of Mazdeism was militant and almost "Calvinistic." It assumed a constant fight against the powers of evil, not by means of flying from the world, or adopting the life monastic, but by taking the offensive against the powers demonic. "Good thoughts, good words, good deeds" is its constant formula, thus proving that a right train of thought and action was regarded as the surest means of combating the evil and confusion which Angra had brought into the world, and completing his defeat and ending his reign. Truth was the chief virtue of the Zoroastrians, and this was evidently recognized by the Parthians, who, with biting sarcasm, commented on several occasions on the want of Roman good faith, refusing to accept the Roman word unless it were set down in black and white, whereas among themselves a merely verbal promise was regarded as strictly binding. "An agreement," they said, "holds with both wicked and upright."

The sinner became a demon in the Mazdean Hades. The immoral and the prostitute were regarded as human scourges, whose sinful glance was capable of withering plants and drying up waters. Barren land was a possession of the fiend, and must be reconquered

for agriculture like an enemy country, a sure sign, when considered along with the cult of the cow, that Zoroastrianism had originally a profound agricultural significance, and had arisen in an agricultural mode of life. But ritual correctness was accorded all the honours of high morality, with which, indeed, it became confounded, and was mistaken for good itself, the act being erected into a virtue.

There is every likelihood, indeed we actually know, that the Parthians embraced a large proportion of the Mazdean ritual and morality. But that it was coloured by their own native beliefs is equally clear. Thus the cult of Mitra, which had been adopted by the Parthians as a name for their solar deity, but which was a word of obviously Indo-Iranian etymological origin, was originally foreign to Zoroastrianism, and appears as a Mazdean divine name only in the time of the Achæmenian Kings (513-331 B.C.), when it was joined to that of Ahura Mazda. In the Younger Avesta, Mitra is regarded as the greatest of the Yazatas, or inferior deities, as a god of light. The worship of Mitra, with its accompanying mysteries, probably originated in Cappadocia, and its beginnings, if the ideas enshrined in the mysteries tell us anything at all of its early form, were evidently barbarous and similar to the initiatory trials practised by savage living peoples on entrance to their mystical societies.

It was to the fundamentally Asiatic and barbarous cult of Mithraism that the Parthians returned in the

latter days of their Empire. Probably on the withdrawal of State support Zoroastrianism languished, and in any case the upper classes, and indeed the people at large, may have always been as indifferent to it as those of Jerusalem were to Jahvism. Indeed it must always have had a large measure of official sanction, as the frieze at Hatra shows. The bull cult triumphed in the end, as, indeed, it did in Egypt and in distant Britain, where Druidism and Mithraism recognized common beliefs, and where a temple to Mitra was raised in the heart of London. The idea of the sun-god who dies a tragic death was, indeed, seizing upon the Near East in the worship of Tammuz, in Syria, and Adonis, in the Græco-Syrian cities, and Parthia appears to have followed suit.

We have seen, then, that Shamanistic, Hellenic, Solar, Zoroastrian and Mitraic ideas had all either helped to constitute the Parthian religion, or had been imported into it. But on the whole it seems probable that the cult of Mitra as a luminary was the outstanding feature of the mixed Parthian faith, the nucleus towards which the more extraneous elements were attracted, and to which they adhered.

This notwithstanding, Zoroastrianism appears to have been upheld by certain of the Parthian Kings, perhaps as a State religion, but the probability is that this condition was merely evanescent, and its purity rather problematical. It is not unlikely that the several dynasties of Parthian rulers adopted now the

cult of Mitra, now that of Ahura Mazda as a State religion, and that an acquiescent priesthood agreed either to the change, or compromised by grafting the tenets of one religion upon the other, as, indeed, we know they did at certain periods. Finally, the ancient Shamanism or domestic idol-worship seems to have disappeared entirely. Mazdean religious ideas were appearing in the Near East at the period of the fall of the Parthian Empire, and the cult of the dying god had taken a strong hold upon the peoples of that region, from Palestine to the borders of India. His rites were more mysterious and dramatic than those of the religion of Zoroaster, with its narrow moral code and wearisome fire-ritual; it afforded the vivid and theatrical excitement of religious pageant, and appealed to the spirit of laxity and hysteria then current in Asia Minor and the contiguous countries. Moreover, it actually held out a greater hope to humanity than any of the former cults, barren and meticulous, had done, spreading the ideal of direct communion and fellowship with the god by means of eucharistic rite and initiation into the mysteries, the partially divulged details of which seem to have excited the ancient world so powerfully.

The course of religious belief and evolution in Parthia, therefore, takes on the aspect of a process of extreme interest not only to the student of religions development, but to the intelligent reader of history. This small country, which became a great empire,

seems to have been a kind of crucible of religions, a region where not only rival faiths battled for supremacy and achieved partial victory or were doomed to amalgamation or defeat, but where experiment was rather freely made with matters theological and doctrinal. But that this latter condition was brought about rather through political stress and necessity than any intention of definitely creating a new faith is obvious enough.

But the fate of religion in Parthia makes it clear that in matters eschatological the East and the West can never meet; that any amalgamation of their religious and theological ideas is well-nigh impossible. The native and Oriental faith of Parthia seemingly joined with the Iranian and Indo-European religion of Mazdeism for a period, under the stress of political necessity. The provincial faiths must have had powerful repercussions upon belief in the imperial centre, just as they did in Babylon, where alien and provincial gods were held "prisoner" in a special temple, or in Rome, where they were accepted *en masse* into the pantheon. But whenever the moment of political disintegration arrived, the entire superstructure fell to pieces, and Parthia returned to her ancient national deities, the tribal Tatar gods of the sun and moon, by this time known perhaps by alien names, but none the less one and the same in essence as when her nomadic people first poured into the valleys watered by the Tajend and the Nishapur.

THE SASANIAN DYNASTY

Ardeshir who founded the Sasanian dynasty was a petty chief ruling in Fars. He challenged Artabanas and won the throne by overpowering the Parthian King in A.D. 226. He not only reclaimed the whole of Persia but even invaded India, and defeated the Romans, thus annexing Armenia to his kingdom. His successor, Shahpur I, conquered Syria up to and including Antioch, during which his armies captured the Roman emperor Valerian. He was a wise administrator and a great builder, for the cities of Shahpur and Nishapur were peopled by him.

It was, however, during the reign of the Persian monarch Narses that the Romans once again defeated the Persians, and deprived them of all the provinces up to the Euphrates. But the greatest Sasanian emperor was yet to sit on the Persian throne. It was Shahpur II who, during his long reign of seventy years, not only compelled the Romans to restore the five Persian provinces but also to give back Armenia and their own possessions of Nisibis and Singara. His defeat of 60,000 Romans, led as they were by no less a personage than Julian himself, ranks as one of the great feats of Persian valour.

The security of the country was again threatened in the time of Bahram Gour by the invasion of the White Huns who swept down upon Persia from across the Oxus in A.D. 425. It was not without difficulty

that Bahram drove back the Central Asian hordes. Firuz, upon ascending the throne, attacked the White Huns some two generations after the death of Bahram, but had to retreat and sue for peace. Later his army was routed by the Central Asians and he was killed in battle. Kobad his son, after waging a war for ten years, avenged his father by completely destroying the power of the White Huns in A.D. 513.

It is to Noshairwan Adil, the son of Kobad, however, that the Persians attach the greatest reverence, and consider the year of his ascension, A.D. 531, to be the beginning of a most noble era of their country. After six years of reign he attacked the Roman Empire and captured Antioch, thereby receiving a sum of five thousand pounds in gold as the price of peace. But Justinian, emboldened by his conquest of Italy, resolved to avenge himself against the Persians, and the two empires contested their power at Lazica in Georgia. As neither side gained any decisive battle after a war which was prolonged for seventeen years, Noshairwan bartered Lazica for a yearly payment of money. Amongst the most noteworthy campaigns of this Persian monarch perhaps were the Yemenite Expedition, and the apportioning of the territories of the White Huns with the Turks.

But it is not for his military achievements that the name of Noshairwan is extolled throughout Asia. It is the reforms of the country and the general organization of the vast kingdom over which he ruled that

have left an indelible mark on the history of the Middle East. He is regarded as the first ruler to introduce the system of agricultural subsidies to the peasants by providing seeds, oxen and implements needful for husbandry. He would have no bachelors in the realm nor suffer anyone to be idle. He had the land carefully assessed, and properly taxed, but, above all, imposed severe penalties in those cases where miscarriage of justice was proved. He encouraged art, philosophy and literature, and his courtiers were world-famous scholars.

Khusru Parviz succeeded Noshairwan, after the fall of Bahram Chubin, the Usurper, in A.D. 590. He invaded the Roman territories in A.D. 602, and as he had captured Dara it seemed to him easy enough to march in a northerly direction up to the Bosphorus, on the shores of which, indeed, he sacked many villages.

Khusru, taking advantage of the decadent Roman Empire, attacked and captured both Damascus and Jerusalem in A.D. 610, and is alleged to have removed the "True Cross" to Persia. In A.D. 626 the Persian King was defeated, and ultimately assassinated, but legend mingles with history over the beauty of his consort Shirin and the grandeur of his Court. The rising tide of Islam in the Arabian desert was too great a force for the exhausted empire of the Sasanians when Yezdigird was defeated at Nahavand near modern Hamadan in A.D. 642, where he was killed by an assassin's hand.

PERSIA AND THE ARABS

It was during the time of the second Khalif, Syedna Omar, that the Arabs conquered Persia, but nothing of great importance specially appertaining to Persian history appears to have happened till the third and the fourth Khalifs had passed away. On the death of Ali, and the abdication of Imam Hassan in A.D. 661, the Omayyad dynasty founded by Mawiya extended its power into Persia. The martyrdom of Imam Husain, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, at Kerbela, on the western bank of the Euphrates, had left a legacy of hatred between the Shias and the House of Beni Omayah. Yezid, who succeeded his father Mawiya, invaded Tabaristan unsuccessfully. The Governments of the Khalifs benefited a great deal from the culture of Persia.

The decline of the Omayyads encouraged a propaganda for Abbas in Khurasan, till, in the year A.D. 747, the black standard of the Abbasids was raised against the reigning dynasty. Abbas himself taking the command, drove the armies of Beni Omayah out of Persia, and his second victory on the Great Zab not only completely destroyed the power of Mawiya's family but also secured for him the leadership of all Islam. Harun-ar-Rashid and Mamun, his son, were the greatest monarchs of that line.

After the Abbasids, the Tahirs of Khurasan ruled over Persia for fifty-two years up to A.D. 872, and

were supplanted by the Saffar dynasty, of which Yakub was the first independent King of Persia after the Sasanians. The Samanids thereafter reigned over the country for a century and a quarter. The most important monarch of that house was Ismail who made Bukhara, in Central Asia, his capital.

Then the Buwayhids ruled over Persia, and extended their sway up to Baghdad, where, at the seat of the Khalifat, various members of that family virtually ruled under weak Khalifs for quite a century.

The Turkish Slave dynasty then came upon the scene, when Alptigin extended his governorship from Khurasan to the western province of India. But it was Mahmud, his successor, who made history by his twelve invasions of Hindustan. He also added Samarkand, Bukhara and Balkh to his dominion. The monarchs who followed Mahmud seem to have been made of a different clay, for in their hands the Ghaznair Kingdom very speedily degenerated.

In the meantime a Moslim-Turkish tribe of Central Asia called the Seljuks, embarked on conquering missions, and under Toghral, conquered Persia. After his victories, he was appointed the vice-regent of the Khalifat at Baghdad in A.D. 1005. Toghral's successor, Alp Arslan, was the hero of war in his time, for he defeated the Byzantine in Asia Minor in A.D. 1071, and was proclaimed the defender of the Holy Cities of Arabia. But Malik Shah extended the Seljuk dominions to so great an extent that it stretched from

Egypt and Syria to Samarkand, in Turkistan. His celebrated minister, Nazamul Mulk, assisted him in State management as he had helped his predecessor.

Although Sultan Sanjar had a remarkable military career and put down revolts, the time for the downfall of the Seljuk dynasty seemed to have come when in A.D. 1141 the hordes of Kara Khitai invaded Sanjar's provinces, after establishing a powerful Empire in Chinese Turkistan. The Murghab valley and Merv were occupied by these Chinese invaders, only to be evacuated after a brief occupation. Later, Sanjar was defeated and slain by the Ghazz.

In connection with the various experiences of Sanjar, mention must also be made of the assassins who penetrated to the north of Kazvin, and the followers of Hasan Sabah challenged the might of even the King of Persia. This sect of the Ismailis received rough handling only at the hands of the Mongols. The Khivian occupied the provinces held by the Seljuks in Persia, and the best-known ruler of that line was Muhammad Shah, who was on the point of marching against the Khalif of Baghdad.

PERSIA UNDER THE MONGOLS

The Mongols were led by Chiangiz Khan first against the Kin dynasty in China, and then, in A.D. 1219, against Muhammad Shah, the last of the Seljuk Kings of Persia. In a decisive battle at Ush, Muham

mad Shah was utterly defeated, and after being chased by the conquerors from Ghazna, Nishapur and Kazvin, he died in an island off the Mazanderan coast. Jalaluddin, who succeeded his craven father, fought against the Mongols till he also was defeated and escaped to the Sindh, whence he returned to Kerman by way of Makran, with the remnant of his army.

It was, however, not until after the recapture of Azerbaijan and Georgia that the Persian troops under him met and defeated the Mongolian hordes at Damghan in A.D. 1228. His heroic exploits lasted but three more years, when he was killed by a Kurdish bandit.

Halagu Khan, a younger brother of the Khagan Cheen, was thereupon appointed head of an expedition in A.D. 1251 to overthrow the Khalifat and stamp out the cult of the "Old Man of the Mountains." In both missions he was successful. The destruction of human lives and property of the Mongols on their sacking Baghdad has no parallel in history. But by their defeat of Halagu's army the Mamelukes of Egypt saved the total destruction of Islamic culture. Halagu's death in A.D. 1265 saved Persia from immediate danger. Abaga succeeded him and was followed by Ahmed and Arghun.

Ghazan Khan, of the dynasty of Il-Khan's, who ruled over Persia from A.D. 1295-1304, was by far the most benign monarch. His reforms are well-known

as also his campaigns against the Mamelukes, from whom he wrested Damascus. England was represented by Geoffrey de Langley at his Court. On the decline of their power, the Il-Khans were supplanted by the Jalayr and Muzaffarid dynasties. The Persian poet, Hafiz, sang during the reign of Shah Shiya, a King of a later House, which ruled over Southern Persia up to A.D. 1393, till Timur won the Empire from them.

TIMURI LUNG, OR TAMERLANE

A Turkish tribe, the Barlas, inhabiting Shahr-i-Sabez, had Timur as their leader. The amir—to call him by his Central Asian designation—after conquering Eastern Turkistan by A.D. 1380, directed his energies to the conquest of Persia. He annexed Herat easily, but Kalat-i-Nadiri could not be reduced without difficulty. Indeed, the fort was forced to surrender on account of the plague which swept over the beseiged. He next invaded Seistan, and then marched northward to occupy Azerbaijan and Georgia, disrupting the principality of the “Black Sheep” there. Neither the defenders of Isfahan nor those of Baghdad could keep him from conquering these two cities and the provinces in which they lay. He invaded Russia, and played havoc with the Moscovites, defeated Bayazid at Angora, and took both Aleppo and Damascus. His victorious march to the heart of India brought him the accumulated wealth of Delhi.

But although Shah Rukh, Timur's son, ruled over a vast Empire, including Central Asia and Persia, for half a century, the military achievements of his illustrious father were too great to live up to. Nevertheless he encouraged art and learning, and gathered scholars of many nations at his court. Ulugh Beg, who reigned after him, carried on the glorious traditions of his predecessor, and it is due to his efforts that the tables of Eastern astronomy were preserved for succeeding generations. Abdul Latif, his son, murdered his father in A.D. 1449.

The monarchs who followed in the line were not distinguished in the art of war, but kept up the encouragement of literature, art and philosophy. The great singer, Jami, and Mirkhond, the historian, flourished during the reign of the later Kings of the House of Timur.

In Persia the successor of Ulugh Khan was overthrown by Hasan, the head of the tribe of the "White Sheep." Like Timur, he also endeavoured to try his strength against the Osmanli Turks in Asia Minor, but was defeated in A.D. 1473, and a second effort was as fruitless as the first.

THE SAFAVIS

The Safavis, who lived in Ardebil for generations, traced their ancestry from the Seventh Imam, and the head of their family, one Saif Ud Din, was greatly

respected both in connection with the royal house of Yezdigird and in consequence of the fact that the daughter of that Persian King was supposed to be married to Imam Husain. The last of the monarchs of the White Sheep dynasty, Uzun Hasan, had also given his sister in marriage to Junayed of the Safavis.

Junayed's son, Hyder, was the father of Shah Ismail, who founded the Safavi dynasty in Persia by first capturing Baku, and then conquering the province of Tabriz. Being conscious of the fact that the blood of the Imams and of the early Kings of Persia flowed in his veins, Shah Ismail considered himself specially qualified to deliver the land from foreign control. He soon extended his dominion up to Mosul and Baghdad, but he made the mistake of making Tabriz his capital, thus detaching the centre of the government from its eastern frontiers by at least a thousand miles. This gave the growing power of the Uzbeks of Central Asia the opportunity of taking possession of the province of Khurasan. But Ismail defeated the Uzbeks at Merv and added the country up to Balkh to his kingdom. During his reign the Osmanli Turks defeated him and occupied Kurdistan, yet withal, he died in 1524 leaving the legacy of a vast empire and a contented people to his ten-year-old son.

The Turks, under Sulaiman the Magnificent, taking advantage of the youthful Shah, marched on Sultaniyeh and occupied Baghdad, but Tahmasp

played no great part as a ruler of Persia. After Khudabanda, Shah Abbas was proclaimed the King of Khurasan, and he cemented a treaty of friendship with the Turks in 1590 whereby Shirwan, Georgia and Luristan became Turkish provinces. The Shah had also to content with the invasions of the Uzbeks whom he ultimately defeated near Herat in 1597 and planted Kurdish colonies in North Eastern Persia as a deterrent to the Central Asian raids.

But Shah Abbas was not the man to allow the Turks the possession of the Persian provinces for long, and after waiting some years he regained Kurdistan, Mosul, Baghdad and Azerbaijan. The devout Shia feelings which filled his mind encouraged his subjects to make arduous pilgrimages to Meshed, Najaf and Kerbela. At Isfahan—his capital—he collected a galaxy of learned men and laid down the finest park-gardens of Persia. But his domestic life has the blot of having had his sons killed lest they should dethrone him: otherwise Persia, by his death in 1629, lost one of the greatest of her Shia kings.

Shah Safi, the successor of Shah Abbas, who reigned till 1642, saw the Turkish army capture Hamadan when he was barely one year upon the throne; and eight years later Baghdad was also wrested from him. The last of the Safavis was Shah Sultan Husain during whose time the Ghilzai overthrew the Persians, and Mahmud occupied Qum, Kashan and Kazvin. As the Ghilzai hero was beginning to play the tyrant, he

was deposed by his cousin Ashraf, who was defeated by Tahmasp under the guidance of Nadir Quli, who was to play a great part in later years in leading the Persian armies to India. In 1729 the Afghans were defeated near Damghan and retreated to their distant lands of Kandahar, leaving Persia to the Persians, under the care of Nadir.

NADIR SHAH, THE GREAT

Although of humble birth, Nadir was marked out for extraordinary military exploits from his early years. At the age of eighteen years he became a captive in the hands of the Uzbek raiders; then, escaping, he joined the service of the Governor of Khurasan, whom he succeeded after his death. In his very first campaign he defeated the Turks and drove them from Hamadan. Tahmasp, the King of Persia, was but a figurehead, and all power rested with Nadir, till, after the expulsion of the Turks from Baghdad and the treaty with the Russians in 1732, Nadir Afshar, the shepherd's son, was proclaimed Shah.

Little less than a year after this, he embarked on his eastern march of conquest. Kandahar was his first objective, and after subduing it, he proceeded northward and occupied Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. Within a very few months the forces were fighting the decisive battle for the hegemony of

the Indian Empire against Muhammad Shah, the Mogul King of Delhi. The Indians were defeated and Delhi was sacked, yet Nadir contented himself with carrying off only the famous peacock throne and riches to the value of some ninety million pounds sterling, leaving India at the mercy of the debauched Mogul. He next conquered the two states of Khiva and Bukhara, but he could not subdue the mountaineers of Daghanistan, and this resulted in rebellions in many parts of his Empire towards the close of his reign. At last he was assassinated by a guardsman, and thus closed a magnificent career of unprecedented skill in battle.

THE ZAND DYNASTY

The assassination of Nadir threw his country into great confusion. First of all, a nephew of the late Shah usurped the throne, only to be blinded by his brother, upon a change in the brief ownership of the kingdom. Soon too, their troopers revolted, and put both of them to death. Thereupon Shah Rukh, as the real heir to the throne, was crowned; but was soon blinded, and had to remain content on the rulership of the province of Khurasan under the protection of Afghanistan.

Throughout the remaining parts of Persia, pretenders rose with alarming rapidity, Husain Khan, a Kachar chief, seized the northern regions of the country; a second was Azad Khan, a third Ali Mardan,

and yet a fourth was Karim Khan, who belonged to the House of Zand.

Ultimately the last-named, overpowering the other claimants, made himself the master of the realm, except the eastern province of Khurasan. Making Shiraz his capital, he ruled not as a King but as a Regent, or Vakil.

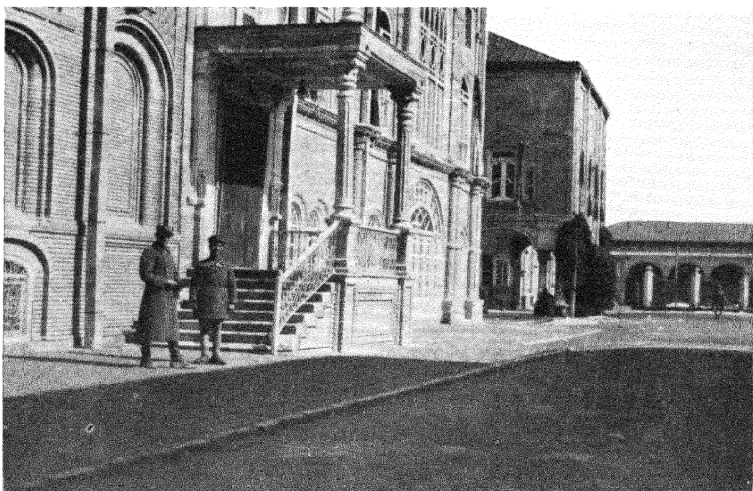
For close upon twenty years after Karim Khan's death, the fight for the throne continued amongst the various members of his family. The Kachars were gaining ground, whilst Lutf Ali Khan represented the House of Zand. In subsequent battles against Agha Mohamed Khan, the Kachar hero, the Zand Shah was defeated, and the Zand dynasty gave no further rulers to Persia.

Agha Mohamed Khan, now began to consolidate his position. But soon he had to fight against Georgia. Immediately after the capture of Kerman, in 1795, he succeeded in invading Georgia, where he was successful in claiming Tiflis as his own. Later he marched towards, and captured Khurasan. On his subsequent invasion into Georgia, two years later, he was assassinated.

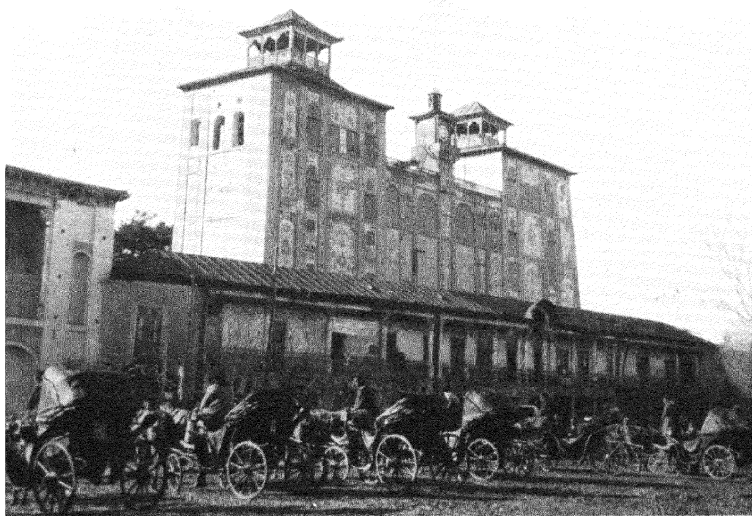
Fateh Ali Shah, his heir, who acted as a Governor of Fars, was crowned King at Tehran. It was during the reign of thirty-seven years of this monarch, that Persia came into real grips of international diplomacy; because wars were waged in his time between Persia and Afghanistan, Khiva, and negotiations were

carried on both with the British and the Russians. He cared more about jewels than for the cares of the State, for it was entirely due to the military skill of his heir, Abbas Mirza, that the Persian frontiers were secured and peace was retained in the country. Unfortunately for Persia, Abbas Mirza died soon after freeing Khurasan from the Uzbek invasion.

Fateh Ali Shah died at the ripe age of sixty-eight, leaving the throne to his grandson, Muhammad Shah, who, after an inglorious struggle with Afghanistan over Herat, and a disagreement with Great Britain, died soon after the Herat expedition of 1837. As there was no pretender to the throne strong enough to challenge the central government at Tehran, his heir, Nasir-u-Din Shah, a mere youth of sixteen, was crowned King of Persia. During the time of this ruler, Persian awakening in the direction of a constitution made its first real appearance.



THE QUADRANGLE OF PERSIAN PARLIAMENT HOUSE



A STATE OFFICE IN TEHRAN

CHAPTER III

THE CONSTITUTIONAL GROWTH OF PERSIA

THE CONSTITUTIONAL movement as distinguished from Constitution started much earlier than is recognized by writers on Persia. It really begins from the day of Syed Jamalud Din. As a panislamist and a vigorous exponent of advanced Muslim theology he had a following in Persia. He took a prominent part in the Young Egyptian movement, which wanted the restriction of the Khedival power.

On the grant of the Tobacco monopoly in 1890 by Nasirud Din Shah to Baron Julius de Reuter, a naturalized British subject, matters came to a head. He had visited Europe three times by 1890, and squandered the accumulated wealth of the Persian Shahs and the Treasury. In 1889 Nasirud Din granted to Baron de Reuter a concession for the formation of a bank, called the Imperial Bank, and a month afterwards the Russian Prince Dolgorouky obtained the right of the first refusal for Russia of any railway concession. A British syndicate, on the

other hand, secured the concession for a State lottery to the amount of £40,000, which the Shah granted to a Persian subject, but this was revoked and the money was not returned.

The ill-judged Tobacco concession which gave full control over the production, sale and export of all tobacco in Persia was deservedly unpopular and this was the first manifestation of popular feeling against the uncontrolled actions of the Persian Government. Mirza Muhammad Riza of Kerman, a follower of Syed Jamalud Din, took a leading part in opposing this, and was imprisoned. The concession was consequently revoked, and the compensation of the syndicate was fixed at £500,000, all which money was again borrowed from the Persian Bank at 6%, thus burdening the country with a yearly payment of £30,000.

A great wave of hostility against England set in at that period, and the influence of Russia, the other power, was in the ascendant. Even Aminus Sultan, an anglophile, changed over to the Russian side.

Nasir ud Din Qajar was assassinated in 1896 by Muhammad Riza aforementioned, in whose interrogation by the Court we find patriotic sentiments fully enunciated. This belies the assertion of some writers that the Persians never demanded any share in the Government prior to the last in 1906.

Muzaffar ud Din Shah, succeeding in 1896 to the throne of Persia, continued to misrule, and affairs in

Persia became worse and worse. His councillor, Aminus Sultan, was detested both by the Mullahs and the people, and in 1896, he was dismissed and was succeeded by Aminud Dowla. The Shah at this time desired a loan for his tour to Europe, but, as Aminud Dowla could not float it in London, he was dismissed. During his short régime Aminud Dowla, with the help of Nasrul Mulk, tried the introduction of reforms, and introduced a simple system of accounts. The Russians, however, knowing his broad-mindedness and patriotism, put every difficulty in his way by manipulating the Court officials. At this juncture Nasrul Mulk, an Oxford graduate, and a personal friend of many European diplomats, was destined to play an important part in the constitutional and patriotic movement of his country.

Although both political and financial difficulties surrounded the Shah, yet he was insistent on leaving for Europe, and a loan was negotiated for in London, but the London bankers wanted control of the Customs, and offered unacceptable terms. Had the bankers offered reasonable terms the position of the Prime Minister would have been saved. He introduced Belgian Customs officials, to whom, in 1900, he entrusted all the Custom Houses. The £2,400,000 at 5% which Russia advanced on the Customs revenues in 1900 was used first for the payment of the Tobacco monopoly of £500,000 at 6%, and the

rest was spent in the Shah's extravagances. Nor was this all, for, by the excessive coinage of copper, he was reducing the poor to starvation, and they had to resort to Bread Riots.

In 1901 two facts became clear: (1) that Russian influence was more predominant than that of the English, for they had lent the money to Aminus Sultan and had worked against the hated Tobacco concession; (2) that Persia was getting more and more involved financially, for again in 1902 a further loan of £1,000,000 at 4% was obtained from Russia for the second tour of the Shah in return for which she obtained the concession for constructing the road from Julfa to Kazvin via Tabriz.

By the time the Persians were awakening to the truth that their Government was selling their country to the foreigner and riots against Aminus Sultan occurred in Jehran. The defeat of Russia—who had found supporters both in Aminus Sultan and Aminud Dowla—by Japan, thrilled the minds of the Persian patriots. The British had been able to sign a treaty of commerce with Persia in 1903, when the commercial treaty with Russia of 1901 was made known through the intrigue of the ministers and the conferring of the insignia of the Knight Garter by King Edward on the Shah. In 1905 the Shah made another tour of Europe and went to St. Petersburg, where the peace *pourparlers* of Russia and Japan came to his knowledge.

The movement for Constitutional Reform at this period was working subterraneously. The tyranny of the governors, the poverty of the people, and the intrigues of the interested powers were driving the nation to the verge of madness. Tabriz, always a stronghold of nationalism, was continually in a ferment. By the first bast, or passive resistant strike, in February, 1906, the Persians compelled the Shah to promise the dismissal of Aminud Dowlah and also to establish a Court of Justice.

The Shah, when the bast ended, refused to carry out his promises. The citizens organized Anjumans or secret societies and founded a National Library, or Kitab-Khana i-Milli. These societies were political in character and differed from the Anjumans of the Provinces, which were really Provincial Councils. Muhammad Abdullah and Syed Jamalud Din, the two influential members of the clergy, became energetic political leaders and Aminud Dowlah governed with more circumspection until, on June 21st, 1906, when the people gathered again to protest against him, they were fired on and dispersed by the soldiers.

The merchants and bankers were then given sanctuary in the British Legation by Mr. Grant Duff, where 15,000 assembled and demanded from the Shah a constitutional form of government. The British now saw the opportunity for regaining the influence in Persia which they had lost, and the British Representative became the intermediary between the people

and the Shah, who now paralysed by a stroke, and melancholic and easy-going, issued a notable Firman granting a Legislative Assembly to the Persians; which, be it noted, according to the Firman, was to include "the Qajar family, the nobles and notables, the land-owners, the merchants, and the guilds."

Demands for constitutional government were made at Tabriz as well on September 18th, 1906, when the people took refuge in the British Consulate. On receiving news from the British Legation at Tehran that constitutional government had been granted, the Tabrizis instituted their Anjuman-i-Nazzar.

The Assembly met on October 7th, 1906, and took decisive action. It refused to consent to the loan from joint English and Russian Funds of £400,000. It began and completed the code of Fundamental Laws by the end of October. It initiated the founding of a National Persian Bank, in the way of which both Russian and English banks now placed innumerable obstacles. The Shah, however, wanted a loan of £2,000,000 before he would agree to the terms. Newspapers appeared like mushrooms and began to be widely read, and the country seemed alive and full of enthusiasm. How short-lived all this was, was proved later.

Mohammad Ali Shah succeeded his father on January 19th, 1907, and he dissolved the Majliss as he had also dissolved the Anjuman-i-Nazzar of Tabriz where he was the governor. The Russians

joined with him in their opposition to the popular cause, for the British were priding themselves on having achieved liberty for the Persians.

But in 1907 the Russians and the British concluded a Convention whereby Persia was divided into two spheres of influence, the northern portion being Russian and the southern British, leaving a neutral territory between. Neither of the contracting Powers was to seek any concessions in the sphere of influence of the other. The Persians were never consulted about this arrangement, and, in fact, were not even informed of the contents of the Convention. Sir Edward Grey, in his letter explaining the Treaty, excluded the Persian Gulf entirely from its scope and, in his announcement to the British Parliament, when the agitation in Persia against this pact became known, he affirmed that the pact meant the entire non-interference of the British in Persian affairs and that it was indeed an assurance of the sovereignty of Persia.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires, M. Hartwig, incited the Shah to abrogate the constitution altogether and assured him of Russian support. The British Legation, on the other hand, made no move, because its Government had concluded the Convention with Russia and did not find it worth while to do anything in the matter. The Shah left Tehran, and with the help of Russian soldiers bombarded the Majliss.

Professor E. G. Browne, in his book on the Persian Revolution, published some secret correspondence of

Col. Liakoff, the Russian officer commanding the Persian Cossacks, showing how he most deliberately and mercilessly set out [not only to bombard the Majliss, but also to annihilate the Nationalists. How far even the British were averse from helping the Nationalists is shown by Mr. Marling's despatch to Sir Edward Grey (June 25th, 1908), in which he states that the first shot was fired by the Assembly and that the Shah was justified in taking strong measures. The Persian Nationalists gallantly defended their Majliss and lost several lives. A number of them were captured and strangled without a trial. A few escaped, amongst whom was His Excellency Taqi Zada, a deputy who then came to England and was instrumental in giving first-hand information to Professor Browne. The *coup d'etat* of July gave the Shah full power over Tehran for the time being, but the people of Tabriz had revolted and the town was besieged by the Shah's troops.

Ain ud Dowlah, the Prime Minister, was the moving spirit of the Shah's intrigues. The Sipahdar, however, had deserted his master at the popular call, and, gathering a body of Nationalists, was marching on Tehran. Sirdar Assad, the head of the revolution, fired by enthusiasm, had come back to his Bakhtiari tribesmen, deposed the governor and declared a march on Tehran. The two leaders, having joined, launched a united attack on the capital, and the Shah thereupon consented to re-establish constitutional government.



HORSE TRAM IN FRONT OF TEHRAN MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS



THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE AT TEHRAN

By this time, due to a remarkable strategy, the Nationalist forces were already in Tehran, and street fighting was at its height. The Shah sought refuge in the Russian Legation. The Nationalists triumphed, and the National Council proclaimed his son as the new King of Persia.

The original Assembly was called Majliss-i-shora-i-Milli and had stipulated control of the ministers who were responsible to it. Any alienation of territory or contracting of a loan could be carried out only by the consent of the Majliss, which would not admit as a member anyone in the service of the Shah. Immunity from prosecution was given to all the members. There was also to be a senate, of which thirty-three were to be appointed to represent the Crown. This constitution was confirmed by the Shah as well, who swore by the Koran to abide by it, and, on the 8th of October, after final revision, he signed it. The constitution fixed the amount of the Privy Purse at £100,000, which annoyed Mohammed Ali very much as this was to cover all expenditure.

Until 1906, the Shah still had also a number of viziers whom he nominated himself as heads of departments. Sadr-Azam or the Prime Minister was his chief minister. But he continued taking an active part in the discussion of State affairs and made his will felt, and never truly realized the limitations of his constitutional position. The ministers were not responsible to the Crown as in constitutionally

governed countries like England, but, rather, relied much more on the good graces of the Prime Minister. Twenty-seven viziers held all kinds of minor portfolios. The new constitution abolished most of these and reduced their status to that of *Rais* or *Mudir*.

Muhammad Ali Shah, too, put immeasurable obstacles in the way of the Majliss. The Russians had a force stationed in the north, while the British, refusing to advance money, continually complained of robberies which they alleged were committed. The Majliss saw the extraordinary importance of overcoming the financial stress by a State Bank, but this was again rendered impossible because Britain, as well as Russia, strongly opposed the obtaining of the necessary funds. That was not all. The malcontents resorted to anti-constitutional propaganda even though the behaviour of Nationalists had been exemplary, and every effort of the Majliss to secure a loan was rendered nugatory by the conditions imposed.

The account of the financial position of Persia written by unprejudiced British writers of the period—is most interesting. It shows how very much higher rate of interest was being charged by both Russian and British banks. That the Russian bank should charge 18% and the British 6% on the money lent to the country—which alone was giving its shareholders all the dividends—is unthinkable. Foreign indebtedness was merely £6,000,000 and income £3,000,000. Though the Persians were opposed to incurring

further foreign debts, they gave the ministers the powers to negotiate a new loan in the Majliss.

Matters went on smoothly for a while, but the Nationalists were not to be left alone. The Russians instigated the deposed Shah to make another bid for the throne by coming from Odessa. The ex-Shah from the north, backed by Turkomans, and his brother Salar ud Dowlah by tribes from Kermanshah, advanced on the capital but were both defeated. The Russians, piqued by this check to their protégés, bombarded the shrine of Imam Riza, at Meshed, and out of sheer brutality hanged and slaughtered the inhabitants of Tabriz. An account of this tragedy is given by Professor E. G. Browne in his *Tragedy of Tabriz*.

The gendarmerie was now organized under Swedish officers, and subsequently became a part of the South Persian Rifles organized by Sir Percy Sykes.

It remains now only to describe the last phase of Persian history by saying that Muhammad Ali Shah abdicated in favour of his son Ahmed Shah; and although the Persians cherished much hopes regarding his attitude towards the Persian constitution, the young Shah developed the weaknesses of his forbears for their liking for frequent visits to Europe at the expense of State affairs in Persia. With the progress of time it became patent that Ahmed Shah had failed his countrymen, till the Great War burst upon the world; and although Persia declared her neutrality,

yet none of the belligerent Powers around her paid the slightest attention to it; with the consequence that throughout the entire course of the Great War the armies of Persia, Great Britain and Turkey fought battles on Persian soil as freely as in France. The Central Government at Tehran had neither any power to prohibit the entry of foreign warring parties within her dominions nor retained a shadow of control upon the lawless elements in the country. It is correct to say that there was about as much Persian control over Persian matters during the War as there was Greek control over Greece during the same period.

But if conditions in Persia shared the world-wide disturbance during the war, what was it that left that country so hopelessly without law and order after 1918, or perhaps even to 1920, if it were not due to the maladministration of the Kachar Government? That it was certainly on account of the dry rot that had set in was shown by the later developments of Persian affairs along the lines which made it possible for Riza Shah, its present King, to save the country from lapsing into disorder and chaos. The Pahlavi Dynasty succeeded the Kachars when the Majliss deposed Ahmed Shah and offered the Crown to the Soldier King of Persia.

CHAPTER IV

RIZA SHAH, THE SOLDIER KING OF PERSIA

HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY, Riza Shah Pahlavi, the present ruler of Persia, is the son of Abbas Ali Khan, late colonel of Savad-Kuh's regiment, whose father, Murad Ali Khan Pahlavi, lieutenant in the same regiment, was killed at the battle of Herat. He was born in 1876, in the village of Alasht, Savad-Kuh district, North Persia. Being of a military family he showed from early childhood a marked leaning towards his father's profession, and when still in his youth, voluntarily enlisted in his father's regiment, in which he served for many years. After a year's service as a subaltern he was transferred to the Cossack division. During this period he was appointed to most parts of the country, and having proved his ability, tact, and capacity for hard work, his services were duly recognized by the military authorities, who raised him in rank, and he was appointed to the command of the Hamadan Brigade.

Soon after the Revolution broke out in Russia in 1917 he drove some of the Russian officers out of

office, and set about effecting certain necessary reforms in the Cossack division. He was, however, soon afterwards appointed to the command of a Tehran regiment. It was during 1920, when revolutionaries over-ran the province of Gilan, that he was again entrusted with the task of quelling the revolt. In 1919 he travelled to Resht and Tunakabun, whence he went to Savad Kuh, his native town. There, amid its peaceful surroundings, he pondered on the complete disorganization of the Government administration and national misfortune. Eventually he came to the conclusion that a complete change was absolutely necessary in order to effect the needed reforms, and he thereupon drew up a plan of action which he carried into effect with unprecedented precision and determination.) At the head of an army one night in 1920, he attacked and entered Tehran, and occupied all public institutions. Following this initial success, his thoughts were directed towards reforming the army and, with this end in view, he merged the various elements of the then heterogeneous army into one unified body, whereupon he was appointed Minister for War.

In 1921, one of the Mazanderan nobility, the Amir Moayzed, rose in open revolt, but being unable to withstand the *elan* of the new Persian army, was defeated, and took to flight. In the meantime Mirza Kuchek Khan had extended his power in the province of Gilan. Riza Shah took the field against the

Recateibatant Jangalis and by defeating them completely broke the power of Kuchek, who died of exposure in the Gilan Hills.

Another revolt then engaged his attention, when Ismail Agha Lemitgu (generally known as Simko), had raised the standard of reaction against Tehran, in the province of Azerbaijan. He and his supporters were well armed and put up a very stout resistance, and after a series of engagements he was defeated, but escaped. This revolt in July, 1921, had not been entirely suppressed when Muhammad Taqi Khan, a colonel of gendarmerie, rose in rebellion in Khurasan. An army was despatched to quell it, and in the engagements which followed Taqi was mortally wounded and order was soon re-established.

Later, Seid Jabal Chamani, one of the confederates of Mirza Kuchek Khan, who, with a big following of marauders, had been for a long time plundering the province of Mazanderan and incidentally extending his malignant influence, was defeated by the army, and was no longer a menace to law and order, and to the national safety.

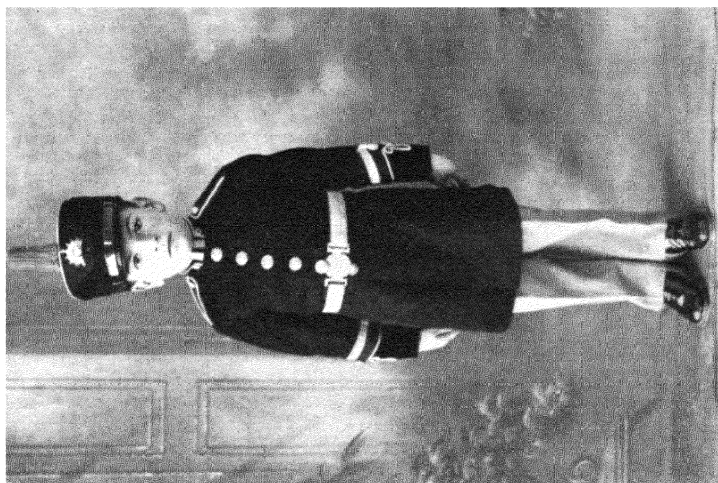
Riza Shah now turned his attention to Luristan where the Lurs, for a considerable time, had been taking the law into their own hands. Royal troops were sent against them, and after being severely punished the fortress of Falak ul Aflak (i.e. high in high) was occupied. At this time a number of members of the Majliss, or Persian Parliament, who looked

with disfavour upon such reforms, started a campaign of adverse criticism and Riza Shah, viewing this attitude with disappointment, resigned his post of Secretary for War. The inhabitants of various provinces and cities, on learning this, rose *en masse* in his favour, and agitated until he revoked his decision and withdrew his resignation. In 1923 a punitive force was despatched to Baluchistan, where in due course disorder was replaced by law and order. In the same year the Kurds of the province of Kurdistan revolted, and it was found necessary to punish them by the strong arm of the military, which was successfully accomplished. It was at this stage that Riza Shah, realizing the dearth of officers, and being desirous of raising the fighting qualities of the army, sent a number of young subalterns to Europe to study the technique of modern warfare.

In July, 1923, Riza Shah was invested with the powers of Premiership. Before the close of that year a republican movement was inaugurated in all parts of the country, which, however, was suppressed after three months' duration. At the beginning of 1924, the Lurs again revolted, and surrounded Khurramabad, and it was found necessary to send a large force against them from Tehran and Kermanshah. They were attacked and, being defeated, submitted to the authorities. His Majesty then proceeded thither and established law and order.



H.M. RIZA SHAH INSPECTING A SCHOOL



THE CROWN PRINCE OF PERSIA

In the summer of 1924 Kazal, the head of the Muhaisin tribe, set up a revolt in Mohammerah and started to collect followers and oppose the Government representatives. Riza Shah led his army into Khuzistan and again, in a short time, put down the revolt. Kazal, too, reluctantly surrendered. In 1925 the Majliss declared the deposition of the Qajar dynasty and called the Prime Minister, Riza Shah, to accept the leadership of the Provisional Government and to convoke the Constitutional Assembly for the purpose of electing a future head of the State. When the Assembly was convened, they took into consideration the Prime Minister's great services to the country, his zeal and energy in the establishment of law and order, and his activities and enthusiasm in introducing and effecting reforms, offered him the Crown, and invested the succession in his male descendants. In 1925 Riza Shah ascended the Peacock Throne amid Coronation Ceremonies of fitting splendour. Among the outstanding reforms carried out by him are: the repairs of roads and construction of new roads; the introduction of wireless telegraphy; the establishment of air routes and air-mail services in the country; the initiation of railway construction, an important national problem; and judicial reforms. Another reform of a highly important character was the official abolition of the Capitulations, from May 10th, 1928, by Persia.

Besides being a soldier, Riza Shah Pahlavi is a great administrator. Of simple habits, he never sleeps upon a soft bed, eats only twice during the day, his chief meal being early in the morning. He walks a great deal, and has the habit of walking round and round the rose garden of his palace when talking to his ministers. Even at the audiences he rarely sits. Though not averse to fine style of furniture or clothes, he hardly ever uses or wears them in private life. His first care is the army, and he once replied to a mild constitutional objection, "The reason why I still preside over the affairs of the army is that I alone created this force for Persia, and if I, who am the most skilled man in the art of war amongst you, did not give the best services for the defence of Persia, we should have revolution at home, and intrigue from without." The army loves him in return, and, being a soldier born, he is never so happy as when reviewing his troops.

CHAPTER V

FOLKLORE OF PERSIA

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

CHILD LIFE

THE BIRTH of a child in Persia is not a personal affair of its parents, but the whole village is concerned in the welfare of both the mother and the new-born. When the news gets about of this event, near relations betake themselves to the house of the expectant mother and the midwife is kept in attendance for days together, whilst the Mullah, or priest, continues to recite the sacred passages from the Quran in that portion of the house which is set aside for men visitors. Two differently arranged cradles are kept in readiness. The one ear-marked for a male child is the more elaborate; very much after the same style as English mothers have cradles of blue satin prepared for their sons and sing the song of "Boy Blue, blow up your horn!"

The lady visitors who crowd into the room where child-birth is to take place furnish an extraordinary scene. In the winter thick and quilted curtains are

hung in the doorway, all fresh air is excluded, and a charcoal fire glows in the centre of the room in which aromatic seeds are thrown, thus filling the room with dense clouds of heavy odorous smoke. Oil lamps, or preferably candles, emit a dim light. Various herbs are pounded, soaked and decoctions are got ready. An elderly lady, who might have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca or Kerbela, sits beside the mother-to-be chanting prayers; a more sympathetic female relation presses the forehead of the "invalid," or another, by telling stories, endeavours to beguile the hour; and yet another, of a jocular turn of mind, in her desire to relieve the nervous tension and the uncertainty of the mind of the "invalid," persists in relating her own case, when she saw someone in precisely the same condition with the result that a boy and not a girl was born.

Ultimately the room is cleared and, every sound hushed. Women go to an adjoining room, and men await the "glad tidings." The midwife then becomes the most important person. If a girl is born, amongst the vociferous congratulations of the guests some shots are fired as a welcome to the new-born, and the Mullah pronounces his blessing by praying that the female child might "walk in the path of Allah like a star of chastity, warble like a nightingale to gladden the hearts of her parents by her obedience, and enrich her husband's house by her accomplishments like the morning dew on a rose." After tea or sherbet is

served the visitors depart. But if a boy is born a great deal more rejoicing takes place. The priest recites the very lengthy religious formulæ, the family bard likening the infant to Rustam, the historical hero of Persia; many guns are fired; the boy is weighed and the like weight of grain is distributed to the poor. The midwife too receives a handsome reward.

Even amongst quite poor people it is customary to give the baby its first wash in scented water. Immediately upon birth the entire body of the infant, except its head, is wrapped in a small quilt which is securely held around it by a cord wrapped round all, and thus, like a tiny mummy, the child may either be laid beside the mother or rocked in the cradle. For three days melted butter or Khakshair, a kind of herbous decoction, is the only diet given to the baby. In many cases a foster mother is engaged, but artificial feeding is practically unknown.

Almost from the beginning of life in Persia superstitions start their thralldom, for the dread of an evil eye is very great amongst the women of that country especially in regard to children. When the child is washed, besmeared with scented oil and his eyes bathed by the holy water of some shrine, then kohl is pencilled over the baby's eyebrows as well as on the eyelids. Various charms, chiefly Quranic verses, either written on paper or engraved on blue stones or glass, are suspended round its neck. In the cap of the child a piece of white cloth, bearing the sacred formulæ,

is sometimes sewn, or again a small round opaque stone about the size of a sixpence, called Sang-i-Baba Quli, is affixed to the dome-shaped headgear of the boy. This charm is supposed to be like a blinded eye, symbolising the wish of the mother to blind the eye of anybody who looks upon the child with an evil eye. A piece of metal, especially iron, if placed under the pillow of a child or better still sewn on its cap, is considered very efficacious in warding off evil-eye influences.

In certain parts of the country the illness of a child is solely attributed to malignant power of the enemy's gaze, or to something which might have frightened the baby. At first they try to discover whether the sickness is caused by a fright. The child is brought into a room where sit four or five women throwing aromatic seeds on a brazier full of glowing charcoals and permeating the air with a peculiar, heavy, aromatic odour. Then a little of the aromatic powder is taken by one of the women in the palm of her hand, and she walks thrice round the child. On completing the third round, she throws the powder into the brazier fire, and as it burns, a whitish froth, produced by the escaping gases, is left. This, after being taken out of the fire, is placed in a tray, and each woman endeavours "to see" what shape the "foam form" closely represents. One will, for instance, say that it looks like a hen, a second may consider it represents a frog and a third may see the

likeness of a man's head in the mass. If the opinions of the majority of the seers coincide as to the particular shape of the "foam form," that thing is taken to have frightened the child, and a ram or a goat must be sacrificed to dispel the illness. But if no two women see the same form, the practice of going round the child and throwing the white powder is continued four times more. Failing to arrive at an agreement after the fifth round, it is supposed to be definitely established that the child has not been frightened by anything, and it is clearly a case of the evil eye.

No amount of sacrifice of goats alone is considered sufficient to counteract the harm done by the evil eye, for the Mullah's help must be solicited. He has to recite the religious formulæ over the water which is to be sprinkled upon the child, and repeated applications of it are to be administered between feeding times. Aromatics are to be burnt more frequently in the sick room, bushels of corn are to be distributed to the poor; and last, but not least, if sweets or fruits in season are presented to the priest, the recovery of the child will be all the more rapid: "for the Mullah's pious lips move in prayer for the health of the sick child, and invoking the help of the Imams, and the village priest has no other sources of income."

Visitors continue to pour into the house where the child is and are right royally entertained and feasted

during their stay, the climax being reached on the seventh day after the baby's birth, when the ladies' apartments, or Andarun, are filled to over-flowing by lady visitors, their children and handmaidens; while in the Bayrun, or men's part of the house, the happy father sits acknowledging the congratulations of male friends and relations. Soon after mid-day prayer, when everybody has feasted and men's tongues are loosened as the tea and dried fruits are being passed round—perhaps for the tenth or the fifteenth time!—the new-born is brought to the men's assembly for the Aqiqah and naming ceremonies, which consist of the shaving of the hair of the head and giving it a name.

Everybody sits on the carpeted floor around the walls, and the centre of the room is left for the barber and the priest. Presently a richly embroidered quilt or a valuable rug is spread out near the Mullah, on which the barber places his instruments, with some rose-water in a silver bowl and a dwarfed stool covered by a piece of gorgeous silk. All being ready the father takes the child, wrapped in its usual manner, in his lap and places it in the arms of the priest, who, having recited some prayers, "puffs their goodness" five times over the baby, beginning each time from the head end and finishing at the feet. The child is then returned to its father's lap, and the barber having wet its hair in rose-water shaves it off clean. Perhaps it is just

as well that by custom the child has to be held by its father when its head is being shaved, for the wobbling of its head and shrill crying would soon unsteady the hands of the barber, if it was not held that way. Superstition has it that an accidental cut whilst shaving the head would certainly diminish the intellectual attainments of the child even if it did not make it demented. It is for this reason that the privilege of child head-shaving is retained by only one or two families of barbers in any one village or town, for very steady fingers are needed and it is not everybody who is allowed to shave an infant's head. These barbers receive not only a gold coin for their services and a suit of clothes, but also a double share of sweets and food which may be provided for guests at the ceremony; and they have too, the right of taking the silk table cover.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the priest again recites prayers, and publicly pronounces the name by which the child is to be known. The name is also uttered loudly in each ear of the infant, and amidst congratulations and feasting the gathering disperses. The same day the mother of the child is permitted to have the dagger removed from under her pillow where it was placed, at the time of child-birth, to ward off the evil eye from her.

Little else happens in the life of the new-born till it is forty days old, when another ceremony must

be performed which is called Aab Chahlam. At this ceremony the presence of the Mullah is again essential, but beyond a few near relations few others are invited. An hour before mid-day when all have gathered to celebrate the occasion, the women in the ladies' apartments and the men in theirs, the father brings the child out wrapped up before the admiring men relations. Then every one greets the infant with prayers, and woe betide the one who omits to say, "God be praised!" upon seeing the child: for an expression of admiration of the child without the addition of this term is supposed to expose the child to the evil eye influences.

The new-born is then exposed to the public gaze for the first time in the arms of its father. A piece of white waterproof cloth is held over the child, some water is thrown on this, and is allowed to flow down to the ground, the idea being that water, sanctified by prayer, in passing over the child, has washed off all liability to evil influences. The same day the mother is permitted to leave her bedroom. But although a measure of immunity is thuswise considered to have been established, the superstition about the evil eye is so deeply implanted in the minds of Persian women that no mother would dream of allowing her child to be taken out without besmearing its eyes with kohl, and drawing a small vertical line down its forehead, or without its amulets and charms properly fastened on. In no circumstances,

however, would a child be allowed out on a Thursday night because the Spirits are supposed to be about on that evening. As a further safeguard, boys are sometimes dressed in girl's clothes, and vice versa, and both are sent out together, so that the female child, which is believed not to attract the untoward influences, may detract the evil power of a stranger from the male child. Withal it is seldom that Persian children are allowed to go out for an airing as in Europe in the streets, highways or parks, for practically every house has a large walled garden where they live almost entirely until five or six years old.

BOYHOOD AND SCHOOLING

Unless the parents are well-to-do, and can employ a private tutor or guardian, their boys are sent to the village mosque schools, or to the house of some local citizen who has a private school. An enterprising teacher, who is almost always an attendant at a mosque and leads the prayers there, thus forms a fair-sized school. It is open to boys only, and although I received my earliest education at such schools, I have never ceased wondering how fifty to sixty boys from five to fifteen, could learn their lessons; especially when the lessons of each differed from those of practically all his fellows, and that all recited their individual piece in the loudest voices of which they were capable.

Early attendance at the school is encouraged and the boy who has taken his lesson from his teacher immediately after the morning prayer, is the first to get off from the class, sometimes before noonday prayer. In my own case I remember once having forestalled the Mullah at his own job of calling the faithful to prayer hours before the dawn, for I was determined to learn my lessons early and get off to a target practice due to start "about the hour when the sun rises to the height of a lance in the heavens," as the Persians say. But possessing no watch and little sense, I walked to the mosque school in the biting air of the starlit night and found the door locked. Knocking at the wicket gate, I was bold enough to shout to the Mullah that it was dawn and that he had over-slept, and a gruff voice from inside replied from under a pile of quilts on the floor. What the voice said is unprintable—enough that it not only sent me home shiveringly cold, but also later in the day earned me the bastinado for leaving the house at midnight.

Turn by turn each pupil comes before the teacher with his book. If it is the Quran, it is kept on a raised folding rack. After the lesson of the previous day is heard and passed, the teacher gives out the fresh lesson, and the boy goes back to his place around the walls of the room. Then small piping voices, mingling with the rougher tones of the older boys, create a din that can be heard a hundred

yards away. Occasionally the Mullah strikes the floor with his switch if he notices that the recitation of the lesson is not as loud as usual. If a boy is merely bending and swaying, with his eyes all over the place, he is at once warned by the teacher. On repeating his inattention he is summoned before the master and his ears are vigorously pulled, and a third time the stick is applied freely. Closing time is just before mid-day, and if any boy has not learned his lesson by that hour, he is merely detained till he has learnt it, and the senior boy who is deputed to see that no juniors lag with their lessons has to receive two or three smart strokes of the palm leaf switch for not performing his duty; so these monitors have generally a free hand to warm the small boys' ears during the school hours.

There is no school on Fridays, and Thursday afternoons are half holidays; but the week's work is examined on Thursday mornings, and presents of home-made sweets or small money gifts are offered by the pupils to their teacher; or accounts for the supply of slate lead or pencils and paper duly paid up, if not in coin certainly in kind. For a pair of reed writing pens supplied by the Mullah, the pupil's father might send five pounds of dried fruits, a shirt, or a roasted fowl. The more advanced a pupil, the greater the degree of favouritism bestowed upon him by the teacher, and consequently the less his hours of play, for a senior boy considers it an honour to

make himself useful to his teacher by fetching and carrying for him when he is not at school. It is, for instance, a great privilege for a monitor to be sent to the baker to buy bread for the teacher, warm the water for his bath, mix up the henna for his beard, or, should the shoes of the Mullah be too tight for him, even to grease them for him.

The popular course of instruction at these schools consists mainly of the learning of the Quran, by rote. Some Persian and Arabic is also taught, and a good deal of attention is also devoted to writing, for caligraphy is to-day still a much prized art in Persia. Mathematics, geography and history do not, as a rule, form items in the curriculum of these mosque schools. Various prayers which are to be recited at worship must be learned by every pupil; and those boys who can melodiously recite the Persian or Arabic verses which describe the battle of the Martyrs are supposed to have attained a great deal in religious education, for from these *Roza Khani*, as these pious recitations are called, both the Mullah and the parents of the boy derive much merit in the eyes of their kinsmen, whilst the reciter himself may be marked out for an important clerical career. He takes as much pride in it as a choir boy singing in an English church. On special occasions senior boys may even lead the prayer and recite religious formulæ, standing in front of their particular class in the mosque, and

thus their secular teaching is perfected before they leave.

Sports do not enter into the life of a Persian boy in anything like the same degree that they do during the school days of the European boy: indeed the two minds differ very materially inasmuch as jumping about or running in games is frowned upon, because they are considered to be against the culture and decorum of the country. The Persian is essentially a serious-minded person, and nowhere does it come out more pointedly than in the everyday life of a Persian youth. There is, however, no morbidness in this temperament. Far from it. On feast days the gaiety is exercised to the full by singing, visiting, and by exchanging compliments, wherein the playfulness of the people is shown. A Persian boy would much rather recite a couplet from one of his great epic poems, or compose verses of his own, than rampage through the bushes seeking birds' eggs. Riding over the hills on horses, ponies or donkeys, or going off with elder brothers on a shooting trip for an afternoon, or playing a quiet sort of game of rounders, forms the chief pastime of the Persian youth.

But in many cases where the poverty of the parents compels them to give little more than a preliminary religious education to their sons, they are placed in a carpet manufactory at a very early age. These factories, however, are not to be judged according to

the familiar industrial conditions of Europe, for, with them, they compare very unfavourably. At the places where the carpets are made the plight of the child workers is deplorable. The houses in which they weave possess practically no ventilation, nothing but a subdued daylight enters the passages, there is no arrangement for heating, and the air inside is dust laden, and children of ten or twelve years, or even as young as of five or six, sit on hard narrow boards making the carpets. Their working hours are from sunrise to sunset, and the sun rises in Persia, at least during the summer, at 5 a.m., and sets a little after 7 p.m. They snatch a bite of food every now and then, and when they jump down from their seats for a drink of water I have seen many really unable to straighten their small legs. Consequently, it is not uncommon that fathers have to carry these knock-kneed child-workers on their backs to and from their homes. Without their nimbly-working fingers, the fine carpets for which Persia is so famous could not be made. Men do not work so skilfully. The Pahlavi Government has now taken rigorous measures to suppress the atrocity of child labour in the Eastern Provinces of the country.

Less unfortunate is the lot of those boys who are placed as Shagird or apprentices to a craftsman. Most of them work in the calling of their fathers. A baker's son, for instance, as soon as he has finished his early schooling, acts as the junior assistant of his father by

beginning to heat the oven, or washing the shop, or weighing the bread, or as a messenger boy. But perhaps the most skilful Shagird that it was my lot to meet was a brigand boy, the only son of a robber chief, whose captive to begin with, and whose honoured guest later, I became. In those wild regions of the Persian upland, where life is cheap, every man takes the law into his own hand, and the best defence is to fire first and ask after. If there was anybody capable of successfully stepping into the shoes of the brigand chief, this marvellous boy of ten years certainly was, I thought, as I saw him one day standing at the edge of a precipice and "smelling the air" as he called it, and announce the approaching caravan down the valley. But as he jumped down from the boulder he sneezed, thus making his father give up the idea of waylaying the caravan for fear of the bad luck which attends an undertaking after a sneeze. Sure enough, later, his scouts brought the news of an approaching caravan, and just before sunset a hundred or more beasts of burden with their owners encamped almost under the overhanging cliffs of the robbers. The sneeze had saved them.

Boys of the higher middle classes, or of aristocratic parentage, receive higher education either for prospective State employment where they are not the only male issues, or "go back to the land" as it were, to look after their father's estates and engage in

agriculture. The military career is attracting many youths of the Persian nobility, more especially since the reign of His Majesty Riza Shah Pahlavi. Beyond an occasional shooting party in the provinces, or a tea-party excursion to Shimran for the Tehran youths, or poetical contests in the towns, the boys of the cities have little else to occupy them when they are not at school. The most important point about the Persian's early education is that, whether with his fellows or with strangers or elders, he is to display to the full those forms of courteous talk and polite behaviour which are the glory of his race. He must be educated to cultivate sedulously those forms of address and deportment with which a Persian is distinguished throughout the East. Compliments without end, he must bestow lavishly on others, and refers to himself in the humblest of terms in conversation. This trait of character is deeply rooted in the minds of rich and poor alike, and correct decorum is the rule of life with all. Alike slow in speech and gait, he must restrain his youthful exuberance; he must neither talk nor laugh too loudly. From the above it must be obvious how foreign it is to him to participate in the rough and tumble of a football match.

The life of a Persian girl is conducted on different lines to boys, because the women are in seclusion, and when they go out of their houses they are fully covered by a cloak. In the home, she is kept busy

either in helping her mother in housework or she does embroidery or sewing when she is not engaged in her lessons. For the education of higher class girls their mothers employ a governess-teacher. Such a woman must be fairly old, for "youth would not obey youth" as the Persian saying has it.

In other cases, when smaller girls go to a neighbour's house for their lessons, where a lady teacher is retained for the common good of the whole district, the school is carried on in very much the same manner as the boys' school. I have noticed one or two rather fascinating points regarding the way in which discipline is maintained amongst the small girl pupils by the mistress, since she is never permitted to strike the children. As correct form of address and deportment rank very high in the education of girls, it is not uncommon for a teacher to impress the palm of a small girl with her thimble at the break up of the school. The child is told that if upon reaching home she salutes her parents with due courtesy and behaves nicely, the thimble impression will remain on the palm, whereas if she is naughty the marks will disappear. What generally happens is that this sign is known both by the teacher and the mother. Next morning, of course, the thimble impression is not to be seen on the palm, consequently the child begs her mother to give her the testimony of good behaviour for, the teacher's impression having disappeared, it might be thought that

she had not behaved well. Whereupon the mother presses her thimble on the child's hand, and the pupil is then happy to face her teacher.

Another lesson of the girl's childhood days is when she is told that if she tells an untruth her mouth will smell foul. Should she be guilty of the offence her mother sends her round to other members of the household to attest the accusation. All grown-ups, being aware of the idea, agree, and not till the child has prayed and promised not to tell a lie ever after is her mouth supposed to be cleansed.

Speaking generally, the thoughts of Persian womanhood are centred upon matrimony, and for that reason the early training of the girl is concentrated upon making her a good mother and a good housewife. Here a little explanation is necessary. Those who speak of the servitude of Eastern women, and deplore the backwardness of their sisters in Asia, view the whole matter in a wrong way. First of all, the social customs, habits of thought and feminine outlook of the Oriental woman, cannot be judged according to European views. The two minds, as well as the environment, amongst the average people of the East and the West, differ. The sphere of women's work in the East is her home, as was the sphere of Victorian ladies during the Golden Age of England. The economic considerations of the world have necessitated an unprecedented industrial activity in Europe,



PERSIAN MILKMAN ON HIS ROUND IN THE
STREETS OF TEHRAN

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in which all hands must be turning the machine of commercial production, and Europe has had to requisition the services of her womanhood to the detriment of the Victorian conception that "a woman's place was her home."

In the East the conditions of industry do not yet obtain in anything like the Western activity; indeed the bulk of the people of Persia are agriculturists and therefore the only help needed from the Persian woman is a small assistance in husbandry and the keeping of the home together. Religion still figures prominently in the life of a Persian, and consequently he wishes his wife or daughter to have a good general grasp of theological knowledge, and even more of housekeeping. Unlike European cities, Persian towns have no large restaurants where man and wife can have meals even if they can afford it; nor are the people there blessed with self-contained service flats and mistake such accommodation for homes. But, even the most conservative people of the country, having recognized the hitherto excessive seclusion of the women, are increasingly devoting themselves to the training of their womenfolk on lines better suited to their present day requirements. And of these requirements they are the most best qualified judges.

The lack of book learning for girls are first appreciated at a conference at Tehran in 1911, where the views of women themselves were patiently listened to and carefully examined. Since then, matters have

not stood still, and in the capital no less than 1,200 girls are receiving higher education at the expense of the Government. Many preliminary schools for smaller girls have also been opened. The Ministry of Education in Tehran now awards diplomas at graduation, and from amongst their own trained students teachers are appointed to various provincial schools. Yet, as has been remarked above, very advanced education for Persian women is not cultivated by the women themselves, because they have no use for women astronomers or even typists. The conditions of the country simply do not demand it, but in their own sphere of making the home a home, and exercising a decided control over their menfolk in practically everything, Persian women have no rivals. If they have no independence in the Western sense, they certainly have the mastery over the supposedly independent Persian male element.

This facet of Persian life must be more fully detailed in order to destroy the popular Western idea that the lot of women in Persia is an unhappy one. As there are no clubs, practically no theatres and few picture houses, the men cannot do otherwise than spend most of his time at home; and in that home his wife sits enthroned. All he wants is the bare human comfort, which it is for his wife to provide; and willy-nilly he has to give in to her in every respect in the management of an establishment where, he must have his rest after the toil and the heat of

the day. The comforts of that retreat give him no cause for meddling with the prerogative of his wife; and therefore she "rules" him in many more ways than meets the foreigner's eye. It is this hidden and private phase of an Oriental's life which Europeans do not see when they lament over the fate of their, "poor, down-trodden, heathen sisters." In the consciousness of her possession, the Persian woman is supremely happy, and truly is mistress of her own house.

After her first considerations about household duties and the children's welfare, a Persian woman takes much pains in self-beautification. Beauty culture is an old art in Persia. Being of fair complexion, with a more or less oval face, with brilliant, large and expressive dark eyes, the Persian ladies use very few cosmetics. The practice of powder and rouge is said to have been in vogue in Persia even at the time of Alexander's march through the country; and that tradition has certainly not diminished with the progress of centuries. To preparing these cosmetics much time is devoted, indeed, a flesh-tint face powder might take a whole year to prepare. The base of that powder is largely imported from Kashgar in Chinese Turkistan, or, in some cases may be extracted from the ashes of burnt almond shells. A part of it is pounded in a pestle and mortar with one-fourth of its weight of seashells or mother of pearl lime, and it is frequently rubbed in the white of an

egg, till the powder is so fine as to be wafted even by a gentle breath. Later, rose-water is added to it, and the whole allowed to dry in the sun. It is pounded again with almond oil and dried rose petals, and, having been mixed with an equal amount of rose-water, is put in a china receptacle a sufficient time to permit the evaporation of the water. After putting it through a muslin sieve, just a suspicion of saffron and henna colouring is added to it, and its paper packets are kept for disposal in a tin in which musk oil has previously been smeared. The mixture of these perfumes gives the powder such an indefinably strong scent, that it is quite comprehensible why only those ladies who were specially trained in the art may use it on their faces. Once when I rubbed what I thought was a small quantity of it over my face after shaving, it not only gave me a ghoulis appearance but both my servant and I continued to sneeze till I had to wash it off.

The method of its application is as complicated as undoubtedly is the manner of its preparation is. Before applying it, one has to wash the face in hot water first, and then with cold water. A gentle slapping of the cheeks during this process is recommended. Then with a swab of cotton wool the powder has to be rubbed vigorously into the skin. A minute or so afterwards it must be washed off with hot water, then cold water, and a coating applied to the face.

Another cosmetic which is frequently used is not unlike the cold cream that one sees in English shops; but it differs in composition. Almonds are beaten in rose water, till the whole looks like milk. To this, white of egg and some olive oil is added and then it is beaten up with a pinch of sodium sulphide and sugar, till it becomes frothy. Many keep it in the house, believing it to possess a wide range of properties, such as the removing of superfluous hair, black-heads and crows feet from the face, as well as a sure corn extractor and cure for burns of all sorts. As I use a razor for the first named affliction, I had no need to experiment with the remedy.

Tinctures for cleansing the skin of the hands and face, bone charcoal tooth-powders, dyes of pounded fresh or dried henna leaves for the finger tips and hair are items of a Persian woman's toilet which she cannot afford to neglect, for all husbands demand that their wives should not neglect these matters. Kohl is also smeared on the eyelids night and morning, its discontinuance being permitted only at times of the greatest grief. The reddening of the lips and cheeks is a habit which has only recently been introduced from Europe, and suffers little through importation. Hair oil mixed with various scents such as jessamine, rose, henna and musk are general favourites, but much care is exercised in discovering which one will lengthen the hair, for the woman whose hair does not reach to the waist is considered unlucky, and

consequently "bobbed" hair is rare, indeed in a certain period of Asian history the hair of a woman convicted for criminal offence was cut short. In well-to-do families much time is devoted by ladies to curling the hair. The parting is made on one side, and for married women it is customary to have fringes cut over each ear; the rest of the hair hangs down to the waist in plaits.

Next in order of self-decoration comes the dress of the Persian ladies. Not only do women in the villages dress differently to those in the towns, but also different clans in the hills as well as townswomen of various provincial cities sometimes have different styles of dress; although, of course, practically all Muslim women, where they are not required to help men folk in the fields, wear long cloaks or a sheet which entirely cover their faces and persons. Rustic women generally wear fairly long and full skirts, the upper part of the body being covered by a tight-fitting shirt, and a sort of sleeveless waistcoat is worn on that garment. The head is covered by a piece of cloth five or six feet square, either of cotton print or silken embroidery, which, when folded diagonally and after being brought over the head and forehead, is knotted under the chin. A long cotton sheet is over all this, and it is not unusual to wrap yet another sheet round for out of doors. The smallest portion of the face of the wearer peeps out of the folds of the outer chadur, or sheet, as she glides along. No veil is worn

over the face by the country-women and beyond perhaps a fraction of an inch of a woman's face, nothing is visible, yet she finds her way with extraordinary facility.

The indoor dress of the women comprises light trousers over which an extremely short pleated skirt is worn. An embroidered garment like a tunic covers the upper part of the person, and usually handkerchiefs in the style of small sheets are thrown over the head, as no hats are worn. Silken chadurs of gorgeous patterns and colouring are not infrequently worn indoors over these dresses, especially on the occasion of the visits of other ladies. The Western form of dress is also becoming popular amongst the townswomen. For out-door use a voluminous chadur of black silk is employed to cover the form completely, although the face is shaded by a kind of latticed hood of either horse hair or stiffened silken material. The pachee, as this hood is called, has practically ousted the old-fashioned rubund or perforated veil of white muslin or black silk which used to cover the face. The pachee has the additional advantage of letting its wearer have a freer view of things, as well as of being quickly pulled down with the approach of a stranger. In their out-door dress the women are so well covered that one might pass one's wife in the street without recognizing her. Wide trousers of dark colour are worn in the streets, each leg of that garment tapering towards the foot, and, as often as not, the

ends are joined with the socks which are held down by country-made shoes. These shoes are peculiar as most of them have no leather piece over the instep of the foot, and heels are high and studded with fairly heavy nails. But I have noticed not only the best Paris model shoes in the shops of the Persian capital, but also observed many ladies of Tehran wearing Russian boots of superior make even to those one sees in London.

Stockings, perfumes and a thousand and one small articles of feminine interest and use which one notices in the shop windows of Western towns, and which you can see not only exhibited in the Persian provincial towns and, judging from the droves of women shoppers, one realizes that women are the same all the world over. Flesh-coloured ladies' stockings, others that are guaranteed not to "ladder," and stockings of American style, with a black triangle going up from the heel, may be bought in Persia and perhaps cheaper than in the European market. I have also seen Russian shoes lined with fur in the streets of the Persian towns. But beyond bracelets and rings, little jewellery is as a rule worn by the ladies. Like the Indian women, they do not load themselves with pounds of gold and silver ornaments, and what jewellery they have is expensive and invariably of good craftsmanship and taste. A Persian woman walking in the streets looks extremely uninteresting; enveloped in sombre dark robes, and covered from head to foot,

she does not invite attention as she glides along mysteriously from one shop to another. None dare speak to her and she is almost always accompanied by her mother or a girl friend, or a trusted female servant. Even a husband is not allowed to walk with his wife in the street, and women are protected both by public opinion and the law of the country.

CHAPTER VI

PERSIAN MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

A PERSIAN lady enters upon the business of matrimony at an early age. While Western girls are still in the "pigtail and piano" stage, the mother of a young Persian girl is already thinking about a future husband for her daughter.

Sometimes as soon as a girl is born, she is "spoken for" by one of the relatives for her son; but beyond being a mere convention this kind of engagement is not wholly binding upon the parties. This practice is found only amongst very near relations, and consequently marriages between cousins are not uncommon. In such cases the mother of the lad of twenty sends some "engagement" presents to the girl's mother. These consist of a piece of gold cloth of red colour, some yards of white muslin for other items of ladies' dress, a pair of shoes and a ring.

If out of these gifts the ring and the gold cloth are retained, it is considered that the engagement has been accepted. But should a pre-arranged understanding to justify the sending of such presents not have existed, and the girl's family not closely related,

then the affair is carried on with the help of an elderly lady who is engaged as a marriage negotiator.

Then one day the boy's mother invites the mother of the girl and all her daughters to a garden party. The young man is allowed to rush past the strangers—as if he were not aware of the visit of the other ladies—and thus a passing glimpse of the youth is afforded both to the bride-to-be and to her mother. Later he is permitted to peep through the chinks of the door at his future wife. The young people's approval of each other is then sought by their respective parents, which, being agreeable, presents are exchanged and the engagement is announced amidst much rejoicing. Men are never called upon to do anything towards this match-making; although, of course, the sanction of the respective fathers is considered to be the final word in this regard; this is never withheld. With the distribution of sweets and the recitation of holy ritual, the contract is fixed.

Invitations for the marriage celebrations are issued in the name of the girl's mother when an auspicious day has been decided upon after consultation with the priest. All are invited, every man and woman of the village, their men-servants and maids, and their children. The consequence is that sometimes the number of guests may reach several thousands. They are all homed and lodged and amused for at least three days at the joint expense of the parents of the bride

and the bridegroom. Such a thing is possible only in Persia, where living is cheap.

On the first day of the celebrations the Kazi or priest performs the marriage ceremony before all the guests and relatives of the parties while the bride, clad in green clothes, sits behind a curtain. After reciting the holy formulæ and having detailed the various duties of man and his wife according to the Islamic faith, the priest asks the girl whether she would accept such and such as her husband.

To the first two questions perhaps the girl does not reply—she is too shy—but the third time she says “Yes,” and it is necessary that the priest hears the affirmation with his own ears. The boy is not there on this occasion, he is represented by a Vakil, whose affirmation is considered valid. And so the contract of marriage is sealed and witnessed before the gathering.

The next day the bride is taken in great pomp to the house of her husband, who presents her with a ring as soon as she steps into her new home.

A Persian bride, when first seen, is a queer little body. She is fattened almost to bursting with rice and sweetmeats, and besmeared with cosmetics. Collyrium has been put into her eyes to make them dark and languishing, and they are made to look elongated by careful painting at the corners so that they may have the shape of almonds. The hair is dyed blue-black by indigo or a reddish-brown mix-

ture of henna and indigo, according to her own fancy or that of her mother. The eyebrows are plastered and painted so thickly that they look like large pieces of court plaster cut into arches and stuck on. They are joined by a thick daub of paint across the nose, the cheeks are rouged to a brilliant red and two shiny locks of hair gummed together are stuck flat on each side of them in the shape of the figure six placed the wrong way. The hands, feet, finger and toe-nails are dyed a light mahogany with henna.

Thus adorned, and wearing a pair of tight-fitting trousers, she walks to her apartment in great style, escorted by two elderly ladies. For the occasion she dons a smart embroidered jacket with short sleeves and a pretty chemisette of light white silk, heavily embroidered with gold thread. The neck, arms and feet are bare, and she is much bedizened with pearls and diamonds. The Persian lady of all ages is usually refined. Many of them are extremely shrewd, and wield the greatest possible influence, greater, be it said, than many of their European sisters even though these possess the vote, and I do not think that they are any less progressive or any more "sheltered" than the "Lydia Languish" type which seems to have been so common in this country a few generations ago, and which seems to have passed most of its time in fainting at the most inopportune moments.

One of the first visits the young wife receives after her marriage will probably be from her father, who

will tell her how cold and desolate her home is since she left it and that her mother is getting old. That is the Persian's way of letting people know how they are missed, and they generally end in having a good cry over it.

The eldest or first wife is usually supreme in the house, manages the domestic affairs and even distributes rations of food to the rest, and is held in great respect and awe by them. But monogamy is now a rule rather than an exception in Persia. Formerly boys used to be married at the age of fourteen, but none can now do so before attaining the age of at least twenty. The marriage of cousins is of common occurrence, but, contrary to expectation, the race does not seem to degenerate in any way in consequence of this. There is no question of "the unwanted child" in Persia, and children are not a source of embarrassment or anxiety to their parents.

No such thing as an unhappy marriage is ever heard of in Persia. Public scandals are rare. They are, indeed, usually hushed up. The too-inquisitive husband is likely to die suddenly one fine morning after breakfast, and the lover who does not have plenty of tact probably perishes in the bloom of his youth. The children of subsidiary wives inherit property on a par with those of the regular wives.

One of the chief amusements in the married life of Persian society is the garden party. It is usually of a spontaneous character, almost like the American sur-

prise party. One family may be calling upon another, when the hostess will suggest a garden party. If the invitation be accepted an immediate start is made. A few carpets and pillows are placed on a mule, a Russian urn is taken, a tea equipage is carried along on a travelling box, while the cook packs his kitchen utensils on the back of a pony and goes on ahead, probably buying a lamb and a couple of fowls as he passes through the bazaar. If the families are intimate with one another the party will be composed of the members of each. The men ride on horses, the ladies on white donkeys, and all proceed in a leisurely manner towards the garden, accompanied by servants on foot or horseback carrying umbrellas and other impedimenta. On reaching the garden fruit is served, then the whole party wanders through the beautiful walks and groves while tea is being prepared. If it be evening, candles are lighted in Russian candle-lamps, the song of the nightingale, the bird typical of Persia, makes liquid melody, and perhaps a musician, a singer or storyteller entertains the company with a romance or poem. Then games of chess or back-gammon are played, but in these family parties wine is never taken.

At about nine o'clock, after innumerable *kalian*s or hookah water pipes have been smoked, dinner is served. The dishes are placed on a leathern sheet and the meal is eaten in comparative silence, although with a great deal of ceremony. About ten o'clock

all retire to rest in the open air, the bedding of each person being spread on his own private carpet. Etiquette prescribes that one should rise at dawn, smoke a parting pipe, drink a little cup of black coffee and take his leave.

Problems connected with the rise of food prices are unknown in Persia. When I was in Kermanshah, bread was selling at seven pounds for twopence, mutton at twopence a pound, while sufficient fodder could be bought to serve a horse for a whole day for threepence. But Persians look upon fruit as their staple food, and the ordinary meal of the labourer at present is a loaf of bread, a pound or two of grapes or apricots, or cucumbers, which are regarded as fruit. The popular drink is *mast*, or curdled milk, which is made by adding a little curdled milk to warm fresh milk. It is left to cool and sets in a few hours, leaving the cream on the top. For the first twenty-four hours it is sweet, and tastes like junket, but the Persians do not care for it until it has become acid or slightly fermented. Occasionally they add three parts of water to it when it is known as *doogh*, a word which means the same thing as the Scottish "soor dook." Cheese, with a little mint or onion, often forms a portion of the morning meal.



THE OUTLOOK TOWER OF TUGHRAL, NEAR TEHRAN

CHAPTER VII

FAIRIES AND FAIRY-TALES
OF PERSIA

FAIRIES OF PERSIA

THE OCCULT marvels of Persia are inalienably associated with the spirit race who, in order to make their nature more plain to European readers, it has been the custom to call fairies. It is, of course, a moot point what the word fairy actually means, but a recent authority has put it upon record that English people employ the name in a manner wholly at variance with its derivation. The word fairy, indeed, means a condition of enchantment, a magical effluence not unlike the Polynesian *mana*, and certainly cannot be applied to, a supernatural being, the correct term for which in English is "fay." This word comes from old French *fæe*, which again is to be referred to Latin *fata*, a fate, a supernatural protector. In such a sense, then, we can truly say that the Latin fates and the French and English fays are the same manifestation, that is they are spiritual entities who inhabit the world

of faerie or magic and in this they bear a close resemblance to the various classes of Oriental spirits who, for the sake of a common denomination, we may designate fairies.

It is not essential that the fairy should be a power for good, and just as fays in Great Britain and France are frequently most malicious in disposition, so we find the supernatural agencies of Eastern countries frequently very vindictive in character. Among the Arabs, the Moghrebi is a sorcerer who has converse with demons, and from one of these men I received a good deal of information regarding the *jinn*, who are as truly fairies as those, let us say of Brittany. He told me that the *jinn* were a pre-Adamite race who had lived hundreds of years before Adam and who, like the European Salamanders, were created out of fire. They were not immortal, and like the fairies must one day die, and they ate, drank and had children like mortal folk, lived in cities of their own and were ruled over by kings or sultans. They could assume any form they chose and were fond of haunting ruins, cross-roads, market-places and savage and desert vicinities. It is a comparatively simple matter, said my sorcerer, to bring them under the dominion of spells or talismans, and this made clear to me the numerous passages in Eastern tales where the *jinns* act as the complacent servants of anyone who may happen to possess a talisman which gives him sovereignty over them.

The word jinn comes from an Arabic term derived from a root signifying to "veil" or "conceal," Fruzabadi, author of the "Camus," says: "The word jinn signifies any spiritual being concealed from all our senses and, for that reason, the converse of a material being." The Arabs speak of good and bad jinn, and since the establishment of Islam seem to have no more belief in them than the majority of the people in this country have in the existence of fairies, although it is only correct to say that Mussulman theologians maintain their existence as super-human beings.

The *Divs* of ancient Persia resemble the European fairies even more than the jinn. They also are said to be pre-Adamite. The male *divs* seem to be of the nature of fiends or sprites, whereas the female, who are known as *peris*, are of gentler and more amiable disposition. Their chieftainess was Gian ben Gian whose dominion was disturbed by Eblis, the Satan of the Quran, who was the head of the rebellious angels and who formerly held dominion over the whole race of jinn.

The *Daivers* of the Hindus seem to be identical with the Persian *divs*. Their sphere is known as Daiver-Logum, and they number three hundred and thirty millions. Their king is Daivuntren or Indiren, whose court is capacious enough to contain the whole of his people. They are the sworn enemies of the giants, against whom they maintain feuds dating from

antediluvian times. There are numerous species of Daivers, as for example the *kinnerar*, or players on musical instruments, the *kinprusher* or servants, who are represented with wings and angels' faces, the *paunner*, or jugglers, who amuse them, whilst others uphold the eight sides of the world. The exploits of these may be read of in the Zend Avesta.

The Burmese *nat* is a wood spirit for whom the villagers leave oblations of food and drink precisely as some people in France, England and Scotland were in the habit of doing only about a generation ago. He dwells in the thick jungle, and on occasion takes the forms of wild beasts just as the fairies did. It seems to me a striking illustration of the theory that the European fairies were probably the dead that the nats should be confounded with the departed. Also when the Burman wishes a wish he appeals to the nats in the hope that it may be fulfilled, in precisely the same manner as the European peasant or child appeals to the fairies to grant his desire. The nat, too, like the fays of France, Britain and Ireland is tricky and mischievous, not to say malicious. These spirits, too, are often conjured up by necromancers and this seems to me an important linking up of the idea of the fairies with that of Spiritualism.

After examining the question of Eastern spiritism with considerable detail, I have come to the conclusion that the great mass of it derives from Babylonia. Babylonia has a well-marked demonology, the figures

of which seem to have been distributed through Oriental lands generally. Babylonia was indeed the mother of Eastern magic and witchcraft. Each of its gods was accompanied by groups of demons; the spirits of disease, for example, were the "beloved sons of Bel," the fates were the seven daughters of Anu, the seven storm demons, including the dragon and serpent, belonged to the brood of Ea who was the great magician among the gods. His sway over the forces of nature was procured by the performance of magical rites. Almost any place, from a temple to a reed hut, was a suitable spot in which to conjure him. There was a class of priests in Babylonia known as the Asipu, who dealt almost entirely with magical things, and it was their business not only to drive out demons but to placate them and consult them if necessary. Demons haunted every department of life, and those which were connected with disease flourished exceedingly. To cure toothache, for instance, it was necessary to know "the legend of the worm" which, vampire-like, absorbed the blood of victims and attached itself to the gums. When the worm heard the legend repeated it came under the power of the magician and was dismissed to the marshes while Ea was invoked to smite it.

But of all the extraordinary spirits which originated in Babylon, Baphomet appears to me to be the most curious. This spirit, indeed, has almost encircled the earth, for not only was he known in Palestine and the

Mediterranean but his worship was brought to England and Scotland and, at a much later date, to America. He is, of course, the goat-god of the ancient Babylonians, and at the same time of the Witches' Sabbath a most ancient deity who was probably at one time worshipped by people who lived the life of herdsmen and who drew their chief sustenance from goat's flesh and milk. Most occultists will remember that the Baphomet was the god of the Templars whom they were set to worship in their secret lodges. By some occultists it has been described as a Pantheistic figure of the Absolute. But the idol or head which the Templars are said to have worshipped they certainly procured in Palestine or Syria. Many Templars confessed to having seen this idol. Some said it was a frightful head with long beard and sparkling eyes, others that it was a man's skull. Some described it as having three faces, while according to others the idol had four feet. The Baphomet belonging to the Templar order at Paris was said to be a silver head with two faces and a beard. Many Templars testify to having seen this idol and having been told to worship it by the officials of the lodges. But the majority of Templars said that they had heard this head spoken of but that they had never seen it personally. At the trial of the English Templars, however, it came out that there were four Baphomets in England, one in London in the Sacristy of the Temple, another at Bristelham, a third at Bruern, in Lincolnshire, and a

fourth north of the Humber. The name Baphomet was supposed to be derived from that of Mahomet but this seems improbable. He is found throughout India, where the goat is the sacred animal which carries saints and riches to heaven as well as the sacrificial beast of the lowest castes in the Carnatic.

This serves to show how, from a common centre, a belief in which there is any original force can become disseminated. Indeed the Baphomet reached America, where in modern times it was most assuredly found in certain lodges of the Reformed Palladium Rite, especially, it is understood, at Charlestown.

Demonism is rampant in Japan despite its veneer of civilization. In the mountains and forests are bird-like gnomes who frequently beset wayfaring men and women and steal away their wits. There are mountain men, huge, hairy creatures, not unlike the brownies of Scottish folklore who make sudden descents upon villages and have a knack of carrying their victims off on their backs for many miles before casting them from a great height to the earth beneath. Demon foxes, too, beset the unwary traveller. These are gifted with miraculous vision and hearing, and can read the thoughts of all men. These are also dowered with the capacity for shape-changing, and, loving to delude mankind, frequently take the form of beautiful women, whose embrace means madness or death. The cat is the Japanese vampire. It is an outcast, as it did not weep upon the death of Buddha.

But, oddly enough, sailors esteem it, as it is thought to have the power to ward off the evil spirits which infest the sea. But perhaps the most horrible department of Japanese enchantment, which may well be included in an article dealing with the belief in fairies and weird doings, is that which treats of the coming to life through the long, dark nights of bronze and stone images of dragons, horses and deer, which terrorize the people and are only laid to rest by summary decapitation. These are supposed to be inhabited by the souls of the living who may be dreaming or sunk in reverie.

All this seems to me to point to the circumstance that, so long as a race remains in a condition of savagery, its supernatural beings partake more of the nature of demons than fairies proper, and that it is only when it reaches the agricultural stage of development that it discovers those tendencies so unalterably associated in the West with the fairy folk. Indeed we can trace the development of fairies, as we know them, through the different stages of savage and semi-civilized life. Thus, in the less frequented parts of Burmah and China they are little better than demons, ever ready to wreak their spite upon the human race, and this, I believe, accounts for the malicious tendency of many Occidental fays. In the folklore of the desert races, Arabs and other Semites, the demonic character is less apparent, and although the Slavs and Balkan peoples possess spirits of dis-

tinctly fiendish aspect and character, these are softer and less savage than the sprites of their Eastern neighbours. We come at last to the Teutonic spirits of house and field and their French counterparts, who strikingly resemble the inhabitants of these countries—so that we may say every country gets the fairies it deserves: and as Persia is a land of fairy tales, a highly imaginative example in this regard may be cited in the following. It is called *The Lost Arabian Nights: or the Mountain of Kaf*.

“THE LOST ARABIAN NIGHTS: OR THE MOUNTAIN
OF KAF”

Although our circumstances were those of extreme poverty, my mother had always assured me that I was the son of a prince. But she refused to gratify my curiosity any further, so that I remained in ignorance of my true origin. On my eighteenth birthday, however, she gave me a ring engraved with mystic characters, three pieces of gold and a scimitar with a hilt of silver and ivory, and embracing me affectionately addressed me as follows:

“My son, go to the court of the Sultan of the Land of Fountains which is five days’ journey from here. Sit down in the garden behind his palace, and when the Sultan himself makes his appearance, approach him and show him this ring and this sword.”

When she had blessed me, I set out upon my

journey. By following the direction she gave me I came, in four days, to the capital of the Land of Fountains and sat down in the garden behind the palace.

Now in this palace is a summer-house of priceless white jade, carved in China, and carried thence on the backs of dromedaries. And as I was feasting my eyes on the beauty of it, which appeared to me as ice in moonlight, I espied through its lattice a loveliness still more exquisite, which burned as a flame in that shining place. A damsel of surprising beauty sat therein. She was like the shadow of a white lily in a dim water, and her eyes were smouldering shadows.

As I gazed in wonder, I was suddenly startled by the sound of a harsh voice, and, turning quickly, was confronted by a tall elderly man of majestic aspect, who was accompanied by two black slaves bearing drawn scimitars.

"How came you here, fellow?" he cried haughtily. "Know you that this is the Sultan's garden?"

"I seek the Sultan," I said simply—for, indeed, I had then no skill in courtesy.

"*You* seek the Sultan!" he said with a laugh. "You in your rags! Well, I am the Sultan. What would you with me?"

"Your Highness," I said humbly, "I bring you this ring and this scimitar," and I proffered him the circlet and the blade.

He took them and his face turned to the colour of ashes.

"Where did you find these?" he cried in an awful voice, "Speak quickly, slave."

"I had them from my mother," I said with some spirit, although I confess I trembled. "I am no slave, Your Highness, but the son of a prince."

"Follow me," he said shortly, and without another word walked quickly to the palace. We entered. I was amazed at the beauty of the place, for it was the first time that I had seen such a paradise of gold and marble, being used to nothing finer than our village mosque. The white ground of the corridors and galleries was shot with rare stones. To my simple eyes, indeed, they seemed the first steps in some happy dream, and when, at length, we came to a chamber hung with green silk and filled with silver cages of sweet singing birds, I thought that no such wealth could have been in all the earth.

"Your name?" asked the Sultan, as he cast himself upon a divan. "It is Salim, Your Highness," I replied, "but I know not of my father."

He nodded, stroking his beard and looking at me strangely. "Yet you resemble your father: he was my younger brother."

"Then Your Highness is my uncle?" I cried in astonishment and would have embraced him. But he repulsed me sternly, and commanded me to stand back.

"It is true that I am your uncle," he said in the most ungracious manner possible. "But you have been brought up as a beggar. He may not mingle with princes who is not himself as one of them."

At this I felt the tears come into my eyes and the blood into my face. Seeing my agitation, the Sultan smiled, though somewhat sourly, and bade me be seated.

"The true blood will show itself," he said, "and the righteous man is just. I will provide you with an opportunity of proving yourself fitted to take up your rightful position. You saw the damsel in the summer-house of jade?"

I bowed low to conceal the colour which once more suffused my face at his question.

"She is my daughter, the Princess Zara," he continued. "She is under an enchantment. While she was yet a child she was engaged in casting pebbles into the lake which lies at the end of the garden. Suddenly the jinn of the lake arose in anger and cast back one of the pebbles, so that it struck her upon the lips. Ever since that day she has been dumb. I have searched the whole earth in order to find a cure for her affliction. Many sage and wise men have I sought advice from, but without avail, until I received letters from the learned Persian magus, Abra Melim, who has informed me that one antidote alone will cure my daughter's affliction. You have doubtless

heard of the mountain Kaf, in Jinnistan, the country of the Jinn?"

"Who has not, sire?"

"It looks four-square to the quarters of the earth. Its foundation is of emerald and possesses marvellous qualities, for with a shred of this magical jewel men can work wonders, can raise earthquakes and cure diseases. Only with such a fragment of this celestial gem can my daughter's speech be restored."

"Is it your will, sire, that I should attempt the adventure?"

"It is," replied the Sultan gravely. "It will allow me to discover whether or not you possess those qualities which will fit you for the position to which you lay claim."

"I am perfectly willing to act according to your Highness's wishes," I said, "but I am inexperienced and scarcely yet a man."

"That is, perhaps, to your advantage," remarked the Sultan with a smile, "the experienced man is more frequently daunted by such an adventure as I propose to you than he whose mind is innocent of the world's craft. Now come with me and we shall arrange for your departure at sunrise to-morrow."

We visited the stables where more than two hundred of the choicest steeds were kept, and here I selected a white horse of graceful appearance, which the Sultan assured me had yet a high turn of speed and great endurance. From the armoury I chose a scimitar

of Damascus steel with a hollow back, into which the Sultan informed me, quicksilver had been poured to add weight to a blow. Then, as evening was drawing nigh, I asked the Sultan many questions regarding the strange country to which I was bound. But of the marvellous things which he recounted to me I will not speak, for did I not behold them with my own eyes?

Before retiring to rest the Sultan handed me a bag of gold sequins. Then, consigning me to the care of Allah, he bade me farewell, counselling me to begin my journey with the first streak of dawn.

No sooner had the sun risen above the edge of earth than I was in the saddle. I rode past the palace garden and the summer-house of white jade, where, alas, no light of loveliness now shone. But my vow to recover the boon of speech for the Princess Zara, my cousin, or perish, was strong in my heart, and whipping up my horse, I cantered on. The Sultan had informed me that Jinnistan, the Land of the Jinn, or evil ones, was situated in the far East, so I set my horse's head in that direction.

The day was fair, the road excellent, and making good progress, I came at nightfall to a small caravan-serai, which, so far as I could ascertain, had but one occupant, a shaven marabout, small, old and wizened, who replied to my questions in the briefest manner possible. Deeming him a holy man, I considered it more fitting to leave him to his devotions than to

trouble him with inquiries. But what was my surprise on chancing to turn my head in his direction to see that he was engaged not in prayer, as I had thought, but in some magical ceremony. The cry of astonishment which I was unable to restrain at the sight caused him to look up angrily. I trembled, fearful that he should cast an enchantment upon me for my interruption. But the frown upon his face turned, to my amazement, to an indulgent smile and rising to his feet, he addressed me as follows:

“My son, I perceive that you are alarmed at what you have seen. But fear nothing. I practise no black art, but only that innocent and exalted sorcery which the wise call white magic. Indeed, the act in which I was engaged was prompted by a desire to aid you. You seem an amiable young man and I merely wished to discover whether your journey would be of advantage to you or otherwise.”

I stammered my thanks, which he cut short by a courteous gesture.

“I am aware of the nature of your venture, Selim,” he said. “Know that I am the sage, Abra Melim, whom the Sultan of the Land of Fountains consulted regarding the malady of his daughter. You seek the Mountain of Kaf. Is it not so?”

Now I was in an excess of dread, for I feared that this strange being might be one of those jinn who are everywhere in the air, in the sea, and even in the bowels of the earth, and who, knowing of my quest,

might seek to destroy me. Therefore I remained silent.

"Fear nothing, my son," said Abra Melim kindly. "I can read your thoughts, and I desire to assure you that your suspicions are misplaced. I am neither jinn nor afreet, as you seem to imagine. Indeed, I have command and authority over the spirits of the elements; if you will do me a small office, I will cheerfully assist you in your task, which is, I know, to obtain a piece of the great emerald which is the foundation of Kaf, the world-mountain, which cures all human defects and is the most potent of elixirs, as well as the repository of marvellous forces."

"O sage! whose name is known to the four quarters of the earth," I replied, "you will not be displeased with your servant if he asks the nature of the office you require of him."

"By no means," said Abra Melim. "Listen: I formerly spent many years in Egypt mastering the hidden knowledge of that mysterious land. One day, while seated on the banks of the Nile, speaking with the priest of that country, my companion pointed to the mighty pyramids which cast their shadows on the place where we reclined. 'My son,' remarked the sage, 'you behold these mountains in stone, the memorials of kings who died, while Greece was yet in the cradle and Rome was unthought of. All the lore that we can teach you is but as a drop of water to the ocean compared with the secrets contained in

those monuments. In the heart of the Great Pyramid is a death-chamber, where rests the mummy of the High Priest who designed and built that stupendous pile. On his breast lies a wondrous book containing magical secrets of great potency—that book, indeed which was given to Adam after the Fall, and by the aid of which Solomon built the Temple at Jerusalem.’ From the moment I heard those words I could not rest. I resolved to find my way into the Great Pyramid and possess myself of the magic volume. Collecting a number of people of the land I addressed myself to the task of piercing the solid masonry, which concealed this ineffable treasure, until, after unheard-of labours, I came upon one of its hidden passages. For long I searched in the labyrinths of the vast pyramid ere I arrived at the sepulchral chamber. At length, groping in the profound darkness, and haunted by the rustling of the wrappings of the mummied Pharaohs, I came upon the shrine where the corpse of the High Priest lay in grim state. I opened the sarcophagus, and, unwrapping the voluminous bandages, found the mystic tome lying among spices and amulets on the shrivelled breast. But as I attempted to seize it my hand suddenly grew numb, as if frozen at the wrist. I was unable to move. At the same time an awful voice pierced the silence of the chamber of the dead.

“Forbear!” it cried, “This sacred volume which you covet may be borne hence by one only—one

destined through the ages for the task. Depart, lest harm befall thee."

"Terrified, I hastened from the pyramid. For years I sought by magic arts to discover who might be that destined one who alone might bear away the Book of Secrets. At last it was vouchsafed to me that it was none other than yourself."

"Myself!" I echoed in amazement.

"None other, as I say. For many years I have watched over you, waiting for the time when I might reveal this to you and ask for your aid. The day is now at hand. In short, it falls upon the morrow."

"But, sage Abra Melim," I cried, "If what you say is true, what hope have you of regaining the treasure of which you have told me? We are far from the land of Egypt, and it would seem to me that the great opportunity is passed."

"Not so, my son," replied the sage with a smile. "We shall be in Egypt by to-morrow morning."

With these words he passed outside to where my white horse was tethered, and muttering some words I could not comprehend, struck him twice upon the withers. Immediately two large wings sprouted from the animal's shoulders, growing in size, and spread until they reached the ground. With an agility I could not have credited him with, the magician leaped into the saddle, and called me to take my place behind him. Then he whispered a word of power into the ear of my steed, and before I well under-

stood what was happening, we were soaring high over the trees which surrounded the caravanseraï.

I felt not the slightest giddiness, nor any fear that I would be cast to the earth below. We proceeded at a prodigious pace, at ten times the rate at which a horse gallops on the earth. Beneath us cities, streams and deserts were spread out like the patterns upon a praying-mat. On and ever onwards we flew. At length the sun went down, and we continued our flight by the moonlight. All night we sped through the star-candled vault of the heavens. With the first light of dawn I could see the shimmering of a great river, which Abra Melim told me was the mouth of the Nile, a vast expanse of green, through which there meandered five streams spread out like fingers of a man's hand laid flat.

Scarcely an hour later we saw what seemed low hills of stone rise in the sands of the desert.

"These, my son," said Abra Melim, "are the pyramids. That one which towers above others is our destination. Prepare for the ordeal before you."

Now the magician had mentioned nothing as yet regarding any ordeal through which I might have to pass, and as I heard his ominous words I trembled despite myself. To what doom of horror might I be devoted? Alas, it was too late to think upon such things or to draw back, and in another moment we had alighted at the base of the gigantic structure of

granite, which frowned above us like the mass of a mountain.

Abra Melim uttered a spell which seemed to turn my horse into stone, so motionless it became. Then he signalled to me to follow him up the face of the great pyramid. Painfully I clambered up behind him, although I noticed that the ascent did not appear to trouble him in the least. Up and up we climbed, until at length, we saw a great doorway make a black mouth upon the shining granite. The magician entered as he might have entered his own house and in great fear I followed.

We halted for a moment while he produced and lighted a lamp with a flint and steel, and then, as if he knew the ways and windings of the place as familiarly as the depths of his own soul, we plunged into the gloomy labyrinth. On and on we walked through the hush of those dusty galleries of the dead, disturbing a thousand bats, and stumbling over the debris of centuries. At last Abra Melim stopped before a great pylon, on the sides of which he fumbled with his fingers. The stone which closed it rose to his touch upon the secret spring, and disclosed a shadowy interior from which came a strong odour of spices.

"Enter," whispered Abra Melim, who himself appeared to be overawed. "You will find the book on the breast of the royal mummy. Take it fearlessly, and return."

"How shall I see without the lamp?" I asked, with chattering teeth.

"Enter, I say," said the magician harshly. "I will hold the lamp so that you might have light."

I obeyed him and entered. I could perceive no tomb or even the semblance of one, nothing but a vast and empty chamber, and I was about to turn to acquaint Abra Melim with this, when a noise loud and terrible as thunder, sounded upon my ears, and I heard the great stone door crash to the ground behind me. At the same time a peal of mocking laughter came from the other side.

"Fool," cried the voice of the magician, "perish in your folly. It was your desire to discover the mountain Kaf. Know, then, that you have indeed done so. For what you thought was a pyramid was none other than the mountain which stands four-square to the points of the compass, and in the recess of which you shall remain until the last day. The Nile you saw was a Nile of enchantment. As for me, I am the Jinnee Salac, guardian of the mountain in which you are now imprisoned. Farewell!"

Now when I heard these words I fell to the ground as one dead. My senses deserted me, so that I seemed to descend past walls of darkness into a great pit. When I came to myself I was still lying upon the ground in the chamber in which the cruel Jinnee, masquerading as a friendly magician, had imprisoned me. I recalled that he had described it as the interior

of the magic mountain of Kaf, which it had been my hope to despoil of a portion of its emerald foundation. But there was small chance that I should do so now. I was doomed, I told myself, to perish in the hideous darkness which surrounded me. The thought was anguish and I wept.

But, as I was bemoaning my fate, I was startled to hear a small but quite audible voice proceeding from the scimitar I carried. At first I thought it must be a delusion of the senses occasioned by the horrible surroundings in which I found myself, but when it continued to address me, in tones of comfort and assurance, I listened attentively.

"O Prince," it said, "be not downcast, for I am able to assist you in the most powerful manner. You believe that it is merely quicksilver which is enclosed in your scimitar, for the purpose of adding weight to the swordsman's stroke. But I assure you that I am a spirit, imprisoned in the weapon you wear for an ancient misdemeanour. If I aid you, and secure your freedom, will you faithfully promise to break the blade in which I am kept in durance, and let me go free once more?"

Desperate as I was, I immediately gave the required assurance; and the afreet—for such I believed him to be—continued: "I accept your word. Know then that by virtue of my presence in this scimitar, it has the power of cleaving any substance, no matter how hard it be. Even adamant will not withstand its

edge. Strike boldly then at the door of granite which separates you from the outer world, and you will find yourself free."

Hope arising in my heart, I immediately drew the sword from its sheath, and, groping my way to the door, directed a blow at it with all my strength. The good blade sheared through the granite as though it had been made of parchment. For a moment I stood amazed at the marvellous power of the weapon in my hand, but, recollecting the danger in which I was, I renewed the attack upon the stone, which presently fell in fragments at my feet. Stepping from the chamber, I found myself in the great gallery, where, for a moment, I stood irresolute, not knowing which way to turn. But the small voice from the scimitar spoke once more, advising me to turn to the left.

Little by little I groped my way along the passage. The feel of the walls told me what I had believed to be stone was in reality, earth, and I knew that I was in the depths of the mountain of Kaf. The voice from the scimitar continued to guide me, advising me as to the turnings I must take, until at length I beheld what seemed to be a star shining in the darkness of night.

Pressing on, I saw that it was night indeed in the other world; but when at last I came to the entrance of the mountain, and was about to descend, such a fierce wind arose that, despite my utmost efforts, I

could not proceed a single foot. Again and again I threw myself against what seemed a very wall of wind, but without avail.

"Use me," cried the voice from the sword. "Cut at the wind, as you did at the granite."

I did as I was bidden, and almost immediately the wind died down. Then, for I felt the surrounding presence of things evil, I made all haste to leave the mountain, down the side of which I scrambled in a panic of fear lest yet some other sleight of sorcery should seek to hinder my progress. Nor were my fears groundless, for, no sooner had I descended half-way, than I was seized as if by a score of hands, which sought to detain me. This time I required no advice how to act, but, whirling the scimitar above my head, slashed left and right. As I did so the most doleful shrieks and cries rent the air, as if proceeding from men mortally wounded. Presently they died away in hideous moaning, and I was not again molested. So making the best of my way to the foot of the mountain, I stood at last upon a substance so slippery to the feet, as to make me feel certain that it could be no other than the foundation of emerald, a shred of which the Sultan had commanded me to secure.

Wielding my scimitar, I hacked mightily at the glossy platform upon which I stood. At the first blow there was a sound as of splintering. At the second, the jewel-mass crackled ominously. At the

third, a fragment rebounded, and struck me upon the eyes. Instantly, the scene around me seemed as if plucked out of the shadows of night, and I could behold all objects within the range of my vision as clearly as if they had been suffused in the strongest sunlight. I now saw that I had indeed succeeded in detaching several pieces of emerald from the parent mass and, gathering them up, placed them in the folds of my turban. But what amazed me even more than the wondrous virtue of the sword I carried, was the circumstance that I was able to see the reflection of myself in the green mirror-like substance on which I stood, which told me that I had altered somewhat in appearance, and had, indeed, grown a small beard.

"Cease! O Prince! to marvel at what you see," cried the small voice from the sword, "for know that you have been immured in the heart of the mountain Kaf for more than a year—so quickly does time speed in the land of the Jinn. Now keep your vow, and free me from the bondage in which I still remain."

"But how, O Spirit, may that be accomplished?" I asked, "seeing that even the most adamant of substances break at your touch?"

"Strike my hilt upon the emerald beneath you," replied the voice. "It is only in the blade that virtue resides."

Seizing the scimitar by the curving blade, I struck the hilt sharply upon the green and shining floor.

The handle at once fell away, and what seemed a ball of quicksilver ran out from beneath it. For a moment this writhed upon the glassy ground upon which it had fallen, then grew and grew, until, to my amazement, I was confronted by the semblance of a tall warrior clad in silver armour, which shone with the radiance of moonlight.

"I am the spirit of the scimitar," he said, in a voice as loud and powerful as it had hitherto been weak, "I thank you, gratefully, Prince, for my deliverance. You doubtless desire to return to the palace of the Sultan of the Land of Fountains. Well, you have but to hold a fragment of the emerald of Kaf in your hand, and desire to be there, to find yourself at your destination."

With these words, and ere I could reply, he vanished. Acting as he had instructed me, I held a fragment of the emerald in my hand, and wished to be transported to the Sultan's garden. Almost before the wish had passed through my mind, I found myself standing beside the summer-house of white jade.

It was still night to others, though not to me, but I boldly entered the palace, and made my way to the Sultan's apartment. On being admitted, he at once recognized me, but informed me that I had been given up for lost. His joy on hearing that the desired antidote had been obtained was overwhelming, and he at once sent for the Princess Zara. When the jewel was placed upon her lips she regained the

power of speech, and so grateful was her father for her release from the bondage of dumbness, that he immediately bestowed her hand on me. Our union is one of the most perfect happiness, and I have found in her a jewel more inestimable and more to be praised than the emerald of Kaf.

CHAPTER VIII

PERSIAN MYSTICISM AND MAGIC

QUESTIONS are so frequently asked regarding the differences between Persian and Western magic and mysticism, that perhaps it will be well to set down the Persian beliefs and opinions in connection with this theme in plain words. One has no hesitation in saying that the whole idea and philosophy of the occult is a thing natural to the minds of all races. One cannot, indeed, aver that it had its origin in any particular place or at any particular time. Anthropologists tell us that, even among the earliest races of mankind, what they allude to as "powers" were believed in by these far distant folk. That which man could not understand he regarded as odd, unnatural or supernatural. The wind, for example, was to him an entity very much alive, dreams furnished him with strange intimations seemingly from another world, and little by little he built up in his own consciousness a whole system of belief which in some cases stood apart from magic and in others was intermingled with it. He instituted taboos which, if broken, had dire results, and lastly there arose,

possibly at an early era, a caste of people associated with the "machinery" of these beliefs, a cult who made a study of them, who acted as intermediaries between man and the world of spirits, and who in the course of time formulated the whole practice of what they called magic into a definite code.

The essential difference between magic and religion, is that, whereas, in religion, one attempts to placate the gods and the world of spirits, to "worship" them, so to speak, in magic the whole intention is to coerce the denizens of the supernatural world into taking a line of action beneficial to the sorcerer or his clients. This is usually effected by a spell, which is thus different from the prayer in being a command rather than a supplication.

But mysticism is a great advance upon the crudities of mere magic. In its expression and desire, it is an effort to achieve unity with godhead by the purification of the flesh through following specific laws and by the abrogation of all that is material and the acceptance of all that is spiritual. First let us regard the differences, if any, between eastern and western magical systems and then examine those between the respective mystical systems of the Orient and the Occident.

Fundamentally, there is, indeed, little difference between the magics of the East and West. We may regard Egypt and Babylon as the mother of each respectively. It has recently been discovered that

Eastern magic owes a tremendous debt to Babylonia, especially as regards the science of astrology. Just as Babylonia was responsible at second-hand for the Vedic religion of India, for she certainly inspired the religion of the Aryan people, so Egypt undoubtedly sophisticated, through Neo-Platonism, the occult systems of Byzantium, from which practically all European magic may be said to have arisen. In both Eastern and Western arcane systems we find the same laws and formulæ obtaining. Spirits are evoked by spells containing almost the same expressions; similar elements are employed in magical practice, the same symbols are used. Personally, I can find no difference between the general magical apparatus of the Hindu, Arabic or Moorish magician and that of the European gringoures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Of course we have to remember that when Byzantium was penetrating Eastern Europe with her occult philosophy the Moors in Spain were spreading theirs through the Iberian peninsula and northward into France. Men from all European countries, indeed, were attending the Moorish schools of magic in Spain, and even from distant Scotland Michael Scot came to Seville and Cordova to study the Arabic-Moorish arcane philosophy. It follows, then, that later European magic, whatever its beginnings, was of Eastern origin. This does not imply that the much older Neolithic magic of Europe did not survive as an

undercurrent, as is indeed proved by the fact of the survival of witchcraft, with an apparatus almost entirely different from that of "official" or "educated" magic. But the magic of the European schools—of Raymond Lully, of Paracelsus, of Agrippa—is essentially Oriental in its basis, as indeed many of its professors frankly admitted. Indeed, if we wish to gain a just idea of the character of European magic, we are forced to take up the study of Moorish occultism, which was, of course, nothing more or less than an offshoot of Egyptian magic later sophisticated by Byzantine ideas and the philosophical notions of the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria. That Greece gave very largely of her best to Eastern magic cannot be denied, and we even find the Muslim soldans of Syria and the Caliphs of Baghdad making large purchases of Byzantine magical manuscripts. So far, then, Europe contributed to her own magical beginnings, although these were certainly filtered through the medium of the Moorish imagination.

So far as mysticism is concerned matters are on a somewhat different footing. I have always believed that there was one great central world mysticism, a system of very early origin, with a commencement rooted away back in prehistoric times, from which all the great mystical systems of both East and West branched out at a later period. But where did it originate? Are we so sure that it was of Eastern origin?

If we go back to the beginnings of civilization we find these, so far as archæological data is concerned, in the Spanish peninsula. About twenty thousand years before the Christian era there existed in Spain a race of exceedingly tall, large-skulled men known as the Crô-Magnon, who brought with them a civilization called the Aurignacian. I say "brought with them," because not even the most sapient antiquary can throw much light on the question of whence they came. They appear in Spain suddenly, and with a full-fledged civilization. Some archæologists contend that they came from Africa, while others as stoutly maintain that Asia was their first home.

However that may be, the earliest stations of this race known to us are certainly situated in the Iberian peninsula, where the Aurignacian civilization arrived at its apogee. Now these clever flint-workers, sculptors and painters, whose work is, in many cases, of a very high order, certainly possessed a mystical system of their own. It was associated with the worship of the bull, whose images are represented on the walls of caverns which archæologists have not hesitated to describe as temples. Along with this worship we find the vestiges of a cult of the dead, and the first rude attempts at preservation of the human body, in the hope that the soul might return to it. The bones of the dead in some cases were painted red, the colour of life, while in others the body was wrapped in skins,



A DERVISH OF NORTHERN PERSIA



A DERVISH OF PERSIAN KURDISTAN

microscopic examination revealing this fact by the presence of animal hairs. The descendants of these Crô-Magnons who emigrated to the Canary Islands, evolved for themselves an art of mummifying the body closely resembling the Egyptian process.

Now the point for us is that sorcery or magic was certainly engaged in by these Palæolithic men of the West. They have left pictures behind them of the worship of demons and the orgies of witches, and that they developed the great Cult of the Dead which later evolved the whole mysticism of Egypt, seems highly probable. There are many myths and tales of Osiris, the Egyptian god, who was supposed to found the Cult of the Dead, coming to Egypt from the West, and we have to remember that the Aurignacian civilization I speak of flourished at least eight or ten thousand years before there was anything remotely resembling a state of culture in Egypt at all.

It may then be that magic and mysticism, in their very early beginnings, did originate in Western Europe. On the other hand, it is possible that the Crô-Magnons were Asiatic immigrants. The trend of civilization has always been from East to West, and we know that at a later stage the Mediterranean became the highway of all cultural traffic, especially between 4000 and 2000 B.C.

There are other considerations, too, which would lead us to suspect that the East was the first mother

of mysticism. We cannot speak for the prehistoric ages of mysticism. We cannot speak for the prehistoric ages of Asia, for the very simple reason that her soil has merely been scratched so far as archæological exploration is concerned, and her prehistoric past remains unrevealed. But this we can say with safety, that the presence on Asiatic soil of such a civilization as the Sumerian seems to render it almost impossible to question the priority of any Western system of mysticism. The Sumerian people were of Mongolian origin, and probably their remnants to-day are to be found in parts of Turkey and Afghanistan. That they had excogitated a very high type of mysticism is obvious enough from such epics as the Babylonian Gilgamesh, the Sumerian myth of the flood, and from what we know of Sumerian religion. Many scholars are of the opinion that the Sumerian faith antedates that of Egypt. It was, indeed, the parent not only of the Babylonian and Assyrian types of religion, but Brahmanism and Buddhism are certainly heavily indebted to it.

It is in Babylonian religion that we naturally discover the strongest traces of Sumerian mysticism. That the Sumerians were adepts in magic and astrology no one who has studied the remains of their beliefs can question. But that, along with this, they practised a higher mysticism apart from the lower cultus, is now beginning to be generally recognized. They were also the fathers of the Chinese civilization,

and the Hittite and Palestinian States also borrowed largely from them.

As I have said, we cannot push back the beginnings of their cult to any period nearly so remote as that of the Aurignacian. Moreover, judging from the relatively scanty data at our disposal, there appear to have been considerable differences between the two systems. But they have one thing in common which they also share with the Egyptian, that is, the whole body of their mysticisms arose out of the Cult of the Dead.

This Cult of the Dead is indeed the very spring and fountain of all mysticism, and its world-wide spread seems to reveal that it must have had a common centre and origin. We find it in America among the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians as well as among the ruder tribes of Indians in Africa, Europe and Asia. It does not seem probable, therefore, that it had manifold beginnings, or arose in several different regions. There is too great a resemblance between its doctrines and its rites, wherever it is found, to permit of such a supposition.

Where, then, did it originate? We certainly discover the highest manifestations of the cult in the East, in Egypt and Babylonia, but, strangely enough, it lingered on in Western Europe, for the Druidism of Britain and Gaul was nothing more or less than its later manifestation. In any case, it was preserved in a much more elaborate form in the East, and

this leads me to believe that subsequent research will yet discover the whole circumstances of its development there.

Confucianism is nothing more than a Cult of The Dead, as is the Shinto of Japan. Brahmanism retained for ages many of its rites, especially in the observance of suttee. Only in Buddhism and to some extent in Christianity and Islam, did the East finally break away from it. But this notwithstanding, powerful reminders of it are to be observed in all of the world's religious system.

But by far the most important cult in Asia to-day is that form of Sufism which received its inception in the minds of early Persian thinkers, and sent forth its branches as far as Bukhara in Central Asia, Konia in Asiatic Turkey, and even North Africa. Many schools of the Cults are to be found in India, Java and even in Arabia; yet as it is claimed to be purely Persian in origin its description is relevant here.

Sufism looks upon man as a spark of the Divine Essence, a wandering light from the Central Radiance, in exile from its Creator, who, besides being the author of its existence, is also its natural spiritual home. Its fleshly tenement is regarded as the prison-house of the soul, and life on the human plane as banishment from God. In the early stages of psychic existence the soul was in full fellowship with God, and had looked face to face on Truth in its reality,

for what we consider to be truth on the Earth-plane is merely the reflection of the perfect and immaculate divine truth. The whole purpose of Sufism is to regain the original status of the soul, and this is only to be effected by a prolonged process of psychic and moral discipline which gradually and from stage to stage exalts the spirit until it arrives at last and once more within the divine circle.

The cosmology or creative process as defined by Sufism is well set forth in a venerable manuscript which describes how creation derived its existence from the splendour of God. In this manuscript the Creator is likened to the sun which diffuses its light through the universe: "As the light of the sun bears a relation to the temporal or the perceptible side of life, so does the splendour of God to the celestial or occult phase of existence."

Sufism recognizes four stages through which the initiate must pass ere he gain perfection and unite once more with the Divine. Through four portals must he pass ere the dark fogs of the Earth-plane drop before his vision and he comes face to face with Truth once more. The first of these is called *Hast*, which may be translated Humanity. This necessitates a rigid observance of the dogmas of Islam, its rites and ceremonies, and is to be regarded as a species of discipline for weaker vessels. In the later phases the bonds of mere mechanical ritual observance are loosened in order that the soul may

have more freedom, but it is considered as essential that in the first stage it should pass through a rigorous disciplinary course.

The second stage is known as *Tariqat*, or the Method by which *Jubroot*, or Potentiality or Capacity, is to be gained. In this stage guidance is dispensed with, and the neophyte becomes a Sufi. There is some dubiety among the Masters as to whether it is competent for him during this stage to dispense with the external forms of religion and plunge entirely into mystic contemplation. The third stage, *Araf*, is a state of inspiration or adeptship similar to the Buddhist Arahatsip. In this degree the spiritual eyes of the initiate have become opened and he is the possessor of supernatural and occult knowledge equal in degree with the angels. The last stage is that of *Haqiqat*, or perfect and supreme truth, in which the soul is completely united with the Deity. It necessitates continued meditation, extreme piety and absolute isolation from all that is gross and earthly. The human must be entirely annihilated so that the spirit may emerge therefrom.

Many initiates at this stage adopt the hermit life, retiring into the gloomy fastnesses of the jungle or the isolation of the desert. But not in inspiration alone does the chief spiritual wealth of the Sufi reside. He is also a scholar, and indeed scholarship is looked upon as predisposing a man to the life of the Sufi. Mysticism and scholarship frequently go

hand in hand, but it is the poet especially who is regarded as the human type most naturally predisposed to Sufism. Poetic and religious inspiration, indeed, are twin fires, and the long flight of the poet gives him an ascending quality which naturally fits him for the exalted ascents of Sufism.

And the poetry of Sufism is perhaps the most soulful and inspiring and the most ecstatic produced by any religious caste. The speech of poetry is held by the Sufi to resemble that of the mystic, and in Central Asia, Sufi devotion is chiefly expressed through its idiom, and, moreover, it is employed as a mystical language to conceal from the profane the hidden meaning of the cult.

The covenant between God and man is a tenet of the Sufi creed. That covenant, broken by the sin of man, can only be cemented once more by the prolonged initiatory course mentioned above. Material things themselves are, so to speak, merely a hallucination: the subjective visions of the Creator, and mind or spirit alone is eternal. Earth and the things of earth are phantasmagoria of which we must beware. God alone is the great reality.

Perhaps the most celebrated exponent of the Sufi doctrine is Mulana Jalal ud Din, the author of the *Masnavi*, whose name is regarded with reverence throughout Central Asia, in which the tenets of the faith are set forth with force and eloquence unequalled. It is an entirely wrong assumption that Sufi belief,

as set forth in his writings, implies that saintship and deification are one and the same thing. Sufism distinctly posits that mortal man can never achieve godhead. Nor does the union of humanity with the divine presuppose an apotheosis of man, but rather the return of a part of the Divine Spirit to its original nucleus. Man, united once more to God, undergoes annihilation so far as his human part is concerned and becomes one with God himself. Indeed, in that stage where the initiate recognizes that his soul is merely a broken light of the eternal spirit, the annihilation of Self takes place.

The Sufis have an especial theory to explain the purpose of Creation. The First Cause, they state, has set in motion a definite programme, in the furtherance of which lies the reason of our being alive. We are born to play a particular part in that scheme, we have to die "absorbed," when we have fully performed that duty. Every created object here has to play a certain rôle to proceed farther on with the scheme. That scheme is to bring about happiness of living for every created thing. A thrush is to sing to add to the pleasure of life of man, a man is to kill a snake that might be endeavouring to feed upon the young ones of the bird. An interdependence is thus established. Each has to work away to the general happiness of the other.

Day by day we continue to perform these duties, and meet with such rebukes or receive rewards to

balance our actions as we go along, till, like a plant that has run to seed, our race comes to an end; and we are absorbed in that oblivion where sits enthroned that Power which has created the life of whatever exists. Pleasure and pain, therefore, are but relative terms over which created objects have no control. Their supervision is in the part of the Scheme. Within limits we are slaves to it. This programme is so clear that if one traces facts which occur to him as unexpected, he will find that they are undoubtedly the outcome and a reaction of his doings some time during his life of which he has retained no remembrance. The purpose of Creation, therefore, is no other than the happiness of created things; and the ultimate end of all, according to the Sufi doctrine, is absorption into the Power that created them.

CHAPTER IX

THE STATE RELIGION OF PERSIA

MORE THAN nine-tenths of the Muslims in Persia belong to the Shia sect. The word Shia means a "following" or a "party" and is applied to one of the two great divisions of the Muslim community, the other being the orthodox Muslims who call themselves Ahl-i-Sunnah wa al Jama. The Shias originally styled themselves as Ahlal-Bait, or supporters of the House of the Prophet Muhammad. The starting point of the Shia faith is the assertion that the Caliphate or vice-regency of the Prophet of Mecca belonged to Ali Ibn Abu Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet.

The question of appointment of a successor arose even before the final obsequies to the deceased Prophet had been performed. The Shias hold that Muhammad had indicated very definitely his preference for Ali above everybody else. He is said to have referred to Ali as Aaron and to have compared him to a moon when he himself was a sun. There were, however, many other facts that pointed to a different conclusion. The Prophet had, in fact, praised all his

four companions in different ways. He had likened Omar unto a Pillar of Islam, while, in his illness, it was Abu Bakr whom he requested to conduct the prayer.

Abu Bakr was elected Caliph with the support of Omar, and Ali had also paid his homage. The three people who at that time are reputed to have put forward Ali's claim to the Caliphate are said to be Salman al Farisi, al-Mikdad bin al Aswad, and Abu Dharr. They are thus counted as the original members of the Shia Ali, or the following of Ali.

Abu Bakr, by refusing the claim of Fatima to some crown land as her inheritance from the Prophet, gave further impetus to the Ali faction smarting under the passing over of their nominee. This antagonism of Fatima and Abu Bakr, and incidentally of Abu Bakr's daughter Ayesha, bore fruit, much later on, in the battle of Camel, fought at Wadi us Sabaa, in which Zubair and Talha, lost their lives by opposing Ali.

However, Ali's recognition of Abu Bakr as Caliph kept the Hashimites or the adherents of Ali well in the background. The next Caliph was Omar, to whom also Ali gave his support and advice, and recognized him as Caliph.

The case of the election of Usman was, however, different. Omar, on his death, had appointed a council for the election of his successor. The Caliphate was offered to Ali on conditions expounded by the umpire of election, Abdul Rahman, who warned Ali that he

must not claim special treatment on account of his "nearness to the Prophet," and stipulated that he should carry on the Caliphate according to the traditions of his predecessors. Ali hesitated, and thus the Caliphate was conferred upon Usman. There was at that time a party of important men who believed that Ali was the more deserving of the two, quite apart from his relationship to the Prophet, and who thus set up the dogma of hereditary Imamate or the Leadership of Islam. Usman, aged, and spiritless, though amiable in disposition and a man of generous impulses, was a tool in the hands of his unscrupulous kinsmen. The governors that he appointed and the ministers and advisers that he had had, included such unpopular individuals as Merwan, his secretary, Abdalla, Ibn Saad, Ibn Surrah, the satraps of Egypt.

The atrocities of these Omayyads, who ever opposed the Hashimites, even during the life of the Prophet, infuriated the populace to such an extent that a deputation of twelve thousand men, with Abdulla bin Abu Bakr, waited on the Caliph for redressing their wrongs.

Ali's part in the drama of the aged pontiff's death by this deputation is obscure, but, after Usman's death, Ali was, nevertheless, elected Caliph, and these people, *Khawarij*, as they were styled, voted for Ali. The *Khawarij* were no sticklers for persons.

Ali, after defeating the insurrection of Ayesha, the wife of the Prophet and the daughter of Abu Bakr, turned his attention towards Ma'awiyah, son of Abu Safian and Hiud—both notorious for their savage behaviour with the corpse of Amir Hamza, another uncle of the Prophet Muhammad—who had been appointed by Usman to be the governor of Syria and who, on the death of the third Caliph, disputed the Caliphate with Ali and had raised the standard of revolt.

At the battle of Siffin, in A.D. 657, the Kharijites who were with Ali now deserted him, leaving with him a following who were now purely Shias. The ruses and tricks of the astute Ma'awiyah were too much for Ali and the cleft between Omayyad and Hashimite was complete. Each swore vengeance on the other. The victory of Ali at Siffin was turned to defeat by the clever machination of Amr bin al Aas, the representative of Ma'awiyah, but arbitration was finally agreed upon by the contending parties.

And thus the animosity continued between the Hashimites and the Omayyads, till Ali had passed away. His two sons, Hasan and Husain, now came into the forefront as the leaders of Islam. The battle of Kerbela decided the issue. The death of Husain at Kerbela, where he was massacred by the troops of Yezid bin Ma'awiyah, laid the foundation of Shia sect proper. As a political party, as far as Caliphate was concerned, they had no future. This religious

side of their sect was given great emphasis by two dominating principles—the first passion-motive and the other epiphany.

The circumstances of Husain's death were extremely tragic, and the presence of all his family, with a number of children, lent a great meaning to the whole gruesome affair. The only male member of the House of Muhammad who escaped this massacre was Zain ul Abidin, the son of Husain by a Persian Princess who was the daughter of Yazdijird. This was a potent factor in converting the Persians to the Shia view.

The passion motive had been very conspicuous by its absence in the orthodox Muslim community because of the prosperity of Muhammad and his peaceful death. How strongly this passion motive works among the Shias can only be judged by actually witnessing the mourning and breast-beating that is prevalent everywhere amongst the Shias during the Ashurah. There are now three Articles of Faith of the Shia. 1. I believe in God the One. 2. I believe in the revelation of the Quran which is uncreated from all eternity. 3. I believe that the Imam especially chosen by God as the bearer of divine being is the leader to salvation.

Ibn Ishaq finds that this adoration idea was inherited from the pre-Islamic Arabs. Al Aswad al Der Ali, who fought with Ali at Siffin, had already struck the note of divinity in Ali by such verses as

“When I looked into the face of Abul Husain (Ali), I saw the full moon which filled the spectators with reverent wonder.”

The other causes that led to this complete estrangement of Sunnis and Shias were the Omayyads and the sterility of Islam, when viewed from the point of view of philosophical speculation. The Arabs were essentially a matter-of-fact, hardy, and simple race, well-known for their lack of imagination. They had no inclination nor desire to speculate on theological questions. Simplicity in thought and action permeated the primary principles of Islam. The Persians, on the other hand, had been saturated not only with Zoroastrianism, Magianism and Hellenic culture introduced by Alexander and his governors, but had always the idea of King-worship implanted deeply. The Khawarij are described by Fahrستاني as men of fasting and prayer. Though bigots, they represented to a great extent the primitive puritanism of Islam. With the Arabs, even though Shias, the question of Imamate and Khalifate was a matter of Beni-Hashim or Omayyads, but with the Persians it became not only a political difference but also a religious one. The Zaidis, who are the followers of Zaid and mostly Arabs, are closely allied to the Sunnis and give to their Imams only the position of “enlightened guidance.” The Imamis, still further removed, believe that the divine portion of the Imam is transmitted from father to the son on account of partial *Hulul*

that is the partial divinity of the Imams. This division of Shias is the most widely recognized one, and the Persians practically all belong to this sect. When speaking of Shias one usually means Imamajas or Asna-Ashari, the believers in twelve Imams.

Shahrastani, in his "Kilab-Mulal wan Nihal" divides Shias into five sects, but the possibilities of dissension were great among the Shias on account, firstly, of question of succession of the Imamate, and secondly, the doctrine of the Ghayba or Hidden Imam. This was reinforced by the fact that, besides these possibilities of differences of opinion as regards the Imamate, the whole problem of Islamic differences had also to be faced.

Shahrastani's division may, however, be taken as referring to the chief Shiah sects. The Zaidis, followers of Zaid, son of Ali bin Husain, not only recognize Umar and Abu Bakr as Caliph but are, as we have seen, the most moderate of the Shias. They also hold that people have a right to choose from among the descendants of Ali any member for the Imamate. They are called *Rawafiz*, or dissenters, by other Shiahs, for they hold that Mafzul, or "less eminent," may be elected even when Afzal, "the most eminent," is also present. Zaid rose in arms and was killed in the neighbourhood of Kufa. It was because he vindicated the Zaidi doctrine that the Imam should be able, by force of arms, to assert his title to the Caliphate, that they prefer him to Imam

al Bakir his brother. Zaid's son, Yahya, followed his father's example and ended his life in the like manner. The Zaidiys are split up into four sub-sections.

(1) ISMAILIYAS. The movement was started by Abdallah ibn Mausun (the Dentist) who died in A.D. 874. He made use of the doctrine of *Wakil*, and represented himself as speaking for the Hidden Imam. The missionaries he sent out were to insinuate themselves into the confidences of people by all and every means and then, after getting a pledge of secrecy, were to induce the convert to give implicit obedience to the Imam, or his earthly representative. His disciple started A.H. 277 the Karmathian sect, after his own name of Hamdan Karmat. The fanaticism of this sect as well as of Fatimides or Western Ismailiys and other Shia sects like the Hashishin or Assassins, was actuated by the notion of the return of Mehdi. The Karmathians even attacked Mecca and carried away the sacred Black Stone, but returned it twenty years later.

Shahrastain's division is as follows: Zaidia, Ismailiya, Asma-Aasharia or Imamia, Kairanya, Ghallia.

Amongst the last-mentioned are included those sects which, though to a certain extent partaking of Islam, have been so much mixed up with other theology and paganism as to be outside Islam. They all exaggerate the divinity of the Imams, making him at times even greater than God. The Ali Ilahis, for

example, are so called because of their deification of Ali. The Nasawiyyahs believe Ali to be moon-god and leader of the heavenly host. Muhammad forms a trinity, of which Ali and Salman are members, but, even there, Muhammad is merely a veil. They accept the Quran but make it practically worthless by the application of *Tawil*, or "allegorical and mystical explanation."

Abdulla bin Mannim, the founder of the Ismailiya sect seems to have affirmed the indestructibility of matter, and further that God is not apart from his manifestations. All religious principles have only a measure of truth in them, and his doctrine was permeated with Christian Agnosticism. He settled in Syria and put an esoteric interpretation on every word in the Quran. "His religious notions were a curious medley of many cults and philosophies in its tendency subversive of law and morality!" says Amir Ali in his *Spirit of Islam*. The methods of his conversions are well set forth by Mohsin Fani in the "Daliy-tan," and one cannot but feel repugnance at the meanness of his tactics. His disciple, Hamdan, broke away from him because of his disagreement as to the use of force in proselytisation. Hamdan Karmat advocated force, and, indeed, put the method into practice.

The Fatimides established themselves in Barbary when a grandson of Abdallah bin Mamium was invited by Abu Abdallah. Saud ibn Ahmad was the

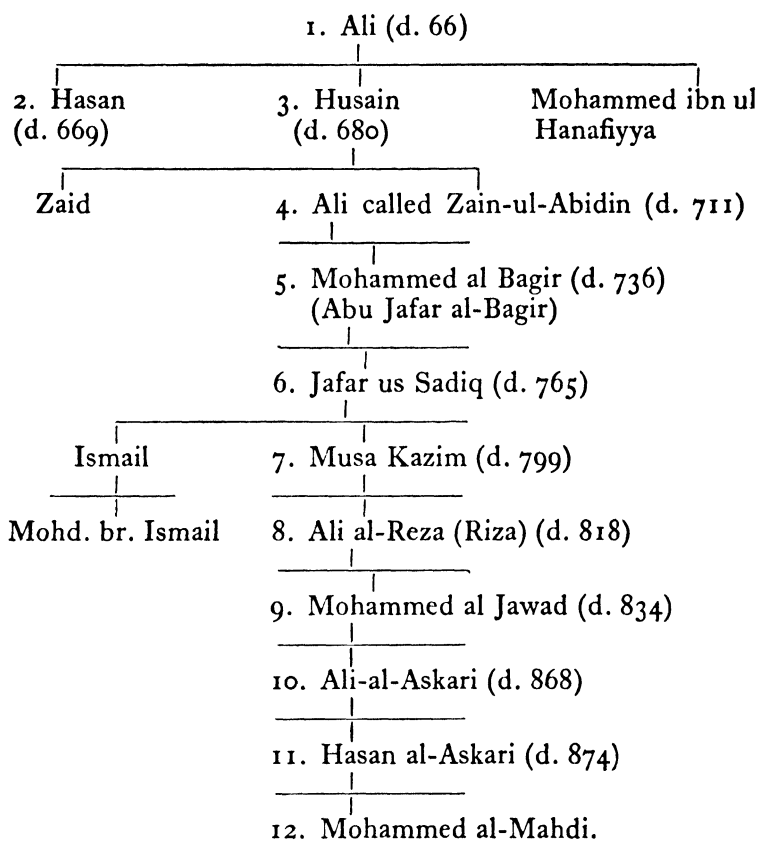
head of the Ismailiyas in Salamiya in Syria. On his founding the kingdom, he gave out that he was a descendant of Muhammad b. Ismail, the Hidden Mehdi, and adopted the name of Ubaidallah. The Ismailiyas tenets remained the faith of the rulers alone, but did not make much headway amongst the subjects of the Fatimides in Northern Africa. The Empire of the Fatimides lasted from A.D. 909 to 1171, till Saladin a Sunni Kurd made his entry into Cairo as conqueror in that year.

The Fatimide is the only big kingdom founded by the Shias, excepting the Persian kingdom of the Safavi rulers. Zaidis hold the Kingdom of Yemen up to the present time.

The Kaisanyas do not, like the Imamis, recognize the necessity of Imams belonging to the union of Fatima and Ali. They hold to Muhammad bu Hanifya, another son of Ali, who, for them was endowed with supernatural power. Kaisan was a freedman of Ali and, as Ali had disowned and punished Saba for calling him divine, so Hamifya disowned Kaisanya Mukhtar, who had gathered a good following and wanted to avenge the death of Husain. Al Mukhtar an adventurer, even with the support of the Persian Mawalis, was defeated at Kufa in A.H. 67, but this defeat, more than anything else, welded Shiaism and Persians closely together.

The Hanifiyyahs believe only in five Imams; the Ismailiyas in seven; and the Isna Ashriyah in twelve.

The Imams follow a comparatively continuous line of descent, thus :



The doctrine of the disappearance of the Imams was the cause of this break in the line of succession. The Ismailiyas believe that Muhd. b. Ismail is in hiding and the Fatimides claim to be acting as Mahdis.

The Shias refuse, of course, to recognize the Traditions collected during the Abbasides, for, to them, the rightful heirship of Muhammad belonged only to the descendants of Ali. Thus the *Sahib Bukhari* and *Sahib abn Muslim*, two great collections of the Sunna or the Traditions and Actions of the Prophet are not recognized by the Shias. They hold that the Imamate is a God-given office and that the judgment of a Khalifa who does not claim to be inspired is of no binding value. In Persia up to the present day, the Shah was merely the mouthpiece of the decisions of a Mujtahid, i.e., the legatee of Imam, whose decisions are final. The office of Sadr us Suddur in Persia became a serious rival of the authority of the Shah. Nadir Shah tried, by the abolition of this office, to break the power of Shiah hierarchy. They had, instead, at a later date, the following four books prepared to combat the great Sunni collection, from which they derive their laws:

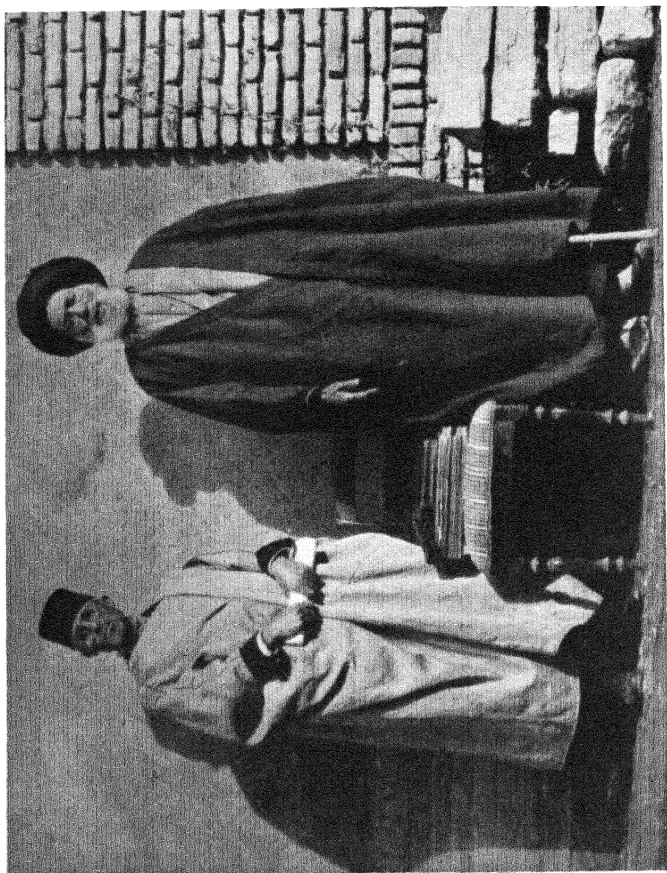
1. Al-Kafi of Kalini (d. A.H. 328); 2. Man. la Yahduruhi-i-Fakih; 3. Al. Istibsar fi Mukhtalifa min al-Akhbar; 4. Fahdib-ul Ahkam; with their commentaries and other matters connected therewith.

The mode of prayer and most of their ceremonials differ very little from the Sunnis, except in minor details. As the Imam is hidden, the Friday prayer is not obligatory. The Shias also sanction *mūta*, a kind of legalized harlotry, whereby marriages may be

contracted for a fixed sum and an agreed period. The Ali Ilahis on the other hand, recognize only monogamy. The Zaidis refuse to recognize *müta*, but amongst the Imams it is well known. The Karmathians are accused even of communities of wives.

The Ismailiyas introduced the doctrine of Takiyya or Katum, i.e., equivocation. It is true that, when the Arab persecution was formidable, the pretension of another faith, while in danger, may have been allowable. Now, however, this is a positive obligation. The Hajj or pilgrimage can be performed by proxy, but the pilgrimage to Kerbala is considered equally important.

As the line of Imams had to be carried on with the transmission of divinity, the transference of this element found expression in other Shia sects. Thus we have also the Wakifya who hold that the Imam does not die, and the Kitliya who find that though the Imam's death is destined, the line continues. Even the Kitliya could not continue this line indefinitely and they make it end at different points, the longest line, of course, being that of the Asna Aashariya or, twelve Imamis. In Persia the Imamate is officially represented by the Mutjahid.



MEN OF LETTERS OF MODERN PERSIA

CHAPTER X

FERMENTS IN THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF YOUNG PERSIA

THE MOST significant change discernible in the East to-day is unquestionably the ferment in the old World of Islam: and in an endeavour to understand the movement one is often led to believe that the change is manifested only in economic evolution or political upheavals. In point of fact the awakening has deeper meanings, for tumultuous influences have materially stirred up the cultural traditions and religious susceptibilities of old Asia. Furthermore, this renaissance of the Islamic world—leaping as it has into prominence within the last few years—should not delude us into thinking that it is of sudden growth, because even before the dragons of War in 1914 ravaged Europe the seemingly dying embers of Islam were all the time receiving breaths of wind to fan them into flames; till now Young Islam had definitely struck its tents and time is opportune to study this trek to a new era in its relationship to the Western World.

In discussing the subject further at the outset let it be made clear that in the Muslim world to-day three distinct schools of thought are distinguishable. Firstly there is a section which gave an impression of a revolt against Islam, a second is composed of those who desire to revive the religion of Mecca, and a third prefers to cling most tenaciously to the eighth-century conception of it.

Under the first classification most observers will place Turkey by alluding to the dismantling of the traditional office of the Khalifate, the abolition of seclusion of women, adoption of the Swiss laws, and finally enunciating a new form of marriage system. In the second category may be included practically all the awakening thoughts of Islamic States—like Afghanistan, Egypt, Arabia and Persia—where although people do not evince any spirit of actual breakaway from the religion, the intelligentzia, at any rate, is anxious to discover a reformed version of the old system so long preached by the ecclesiasts and which, in the nature of things, falls short in answering the requirements of the present age. The third section, bowing its heads to Mecca, will not envisage any tampering with the priest-made dogmas and cannot conceive any interpretation of Islam other than what the village Mullah has taught them, as his fathers had taught their grandsires for centuries together. Signs are, however, not wanting to show that even in such conservative camps there are

ripples of increasing dissatisfaction against the traditional hierarchy of the clergy.

For a just appreciation of what is to follow it is necessary to trace the causes of these ferments. Now in spite of the fact the present tendencies in Islam show three distinct phases and so may appear separate and often contradictory, they are in essence the same inasmuch as practically everywhere revolt is raised against the clergy. It is an insurrection not against the original faith of the Prophet of Mecca, shorn of all its traditional trappings and reservations but against that cumbrous tapestry of priest-woven tenets, which had as its avowed object the clouding of all intelligent religious research. Generally speaking, this autocracy of the clergy in the East was complete towards the close of the last century, when not only was that element characterized by intolerant propaganda of their own version of Islamic creed and liturgy, but as its power gained strength, religion in most cases was relegated to the second place, and there is positive evidence to show that their influence not a few times tipped the scales in respect to many state policies. Asia trembled under their tread, then, because, not only did their decree threaten to put each and every person with an inquiring disposition outside the pale of Islam, but also Kings are known to consolidate their position through the ecclesiastical good will and co-operation. A phenomenon of symbiosis worked admirably while the subject races groaned in travail.

The manner in which this thrall and gloom was accenuated can be gathered by citing an almost classical story of a gathering in the Middle East, where a Mullah of Bokhara reputé was delivering a sermon to a warlike congregation. He spoke of Allah and his Prophet, he dealt with his conception of good and evil and was in the climax of his discourse as he made the hearts of the faithful sink with the details of the brimstone-fed fire of Hell, and then delighted their imaginations by the description of brooks of honey and milk where the "accepted ones" will be reposing under the celestial bowers of Allah's garden. "Speak, ye, who dares to dissent," he challenged his hearers. For a minute or two complete silence pervaded the scene, then one heard a Hazara open his snuff-box with a click, sitting in the outermost row of the audience. "Let us lift our hands in prayer then!" shouted the Mullah: but the yellow complexioned Mongolian jumped to his feet. "You say, Oh Mullah," he spoke, "who had trod the path of Islam far and wide, that the bridge of Sarat over which man's soul after death will cross is finer than the keen edge of the sword, thinner than hair, and more delicate than the strands of the cobweb!" Wild men clutched their rifle butts, the brows of the Hillmen clouded as they glared darkly at the insolent interrupter. But the Hazara, to whose feet still clung the sands of the desert, spoke on. "If that is the description of the bridge," he continued,

“why do you not say, Oh Mullah of repute, that there is no bridge and be finished with it?” Awkward silence reigned again, “Do you hear me, Oh Mullah?” again rang the voice of the beady-eyed Hazara, as he adjusted his skull cap. And still the Mullah stood mute, passive, his sword hand twisting the wooden beads of his rosary, only the slow red which mantled his cheeks telling that he had heard. At last he spoke. “Yes! I do hear, and the Qazi will reply to it at the close of the sundown prayer for mouthing such godless words which thou hast heard from the unbelievers.” The Qazi had pronounced, and the next morning the congregation joined a funeral service outside Ragistan for the Hazara. The self-same Mullah reading the sad epilogue, making the lesson trickle deep in the hearts of his audience.

In larger fields, too, this religious servilism made itself felt in no small extent, for the attempt of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the greatest Muslim reformer and educationalist that is known to the contemporary Indian history, was, immediately boycotted by the Indian clergy in the last decade of the nineteenth century as being not only unworthy of the faith of his fathers, but also considerable hindrance was placed in his way to even advocate the cause of Muslim education on modern lines in India.

Then there are those who at one time alleged that it was the preaching and precepts of Syed Jama-luddin Afghani—a religio-political sage who lived

towards the end of the last century—who impelled the assassin of Nasiraddin Shah Kachar to travel all the way from Turkey to Iraq to shoot the Shah of Persia. Indeed, even down to the days of the most recent history, the priest-ridden peoples of Asia have been singularly unfortunate in creating unpleasant political circumstances. Later, the Kurdish revolt against the Angora Government was also symptomatic of the same ideas, and there an insurrection was fermented which was for some little while carried on successfully against the Nationalist Turks by the religious guides of Kurdistan. Nor was Persia spared in this regard, for H.M. Raza Shah Pahlavi—if the truth is to be told—is said to have considered himself secure on the throne after the Majtahids of the shrines of Nejaf and Kerbella conferred their blessings upon him.

The ban that was placed upon Abdul Raziq's book in 1926 and the anathema of the clergy of Alhazr in Egypt upon Tah Husain's poetical commentary are all incidents lending support to the contention that a fierce struggle is raging between the Islamic priesthood and the awakening East for liberty and progress of vision. The spirit of tradition is confronted by the hustling desire of the modern innovator; and it might be added that against the hot glow of this passionate purpose of the Muslim revivalists the priestly class is now merely fighting a losing battle. The mordenists on one side are pillorying older thought preached by

the divines of circumscribed vision, while on the other the doctors of theology are blatant against the rising generation for loss of credence in the cult in which generations have lived and died in the East since long past antiquity.

In this fierce struggle it will be futile to assume that the revivalists are nearing victory single-handed, for the Western impact to the slumberous East of a recent age has played a very conspicuous part towards the awakening of Asia. Yet it might perhaps be incorrect to own that the germ of this revivalism in the East was supplied by the West, withal the momentum which the spirit has gained was certainly accentuated by European influences.

The ground, too, in which the Oriental reformers are presently operating is to a large extent prepared through Western contact. But this Western impact started with an intellectual approach and unfortunately made a disappointing end, insofar as its more recent impetus took the form of pure and simple materialism. It began to appeal to the economic life of a class in Asia which misunderstood it for the best that the West could bestow upon the East.

The restless hunger of Europe for commerce and industry gripped them. Merchantmen came sailing along from the West, they sold wrist-watches to those who had reckoned the time by watching the stars and never made a mistake. The traders returned home with rich silks and carpets and related stories

of the "heathen." Then came again with motor cars, kinemas, missionaries and "Observers of world evolution." No doubt all forces of this kind are admirable but these agencies are sometimes the only channels through which unsophisticated sons of Asia can look upon the West and absorb its culture. The net result is—which we notice practically all over the East to-day in its challenging aspect to the West—that the graft has not succeeded. The East has unquestionably become ultra-commercial (the recent report of the Economic Conference at Geneva will repay study in this regard) but real Asia is in a turmoil, in convulsions of cultural regeneration which it is rapidly endeavouring to get over-armed, as it is with the weapons and the lessons of the West.

Whatever the faults of both the thralldom of the Muslim clergy and the Western impact as being the two most important contributing causes under which modern religious thought of Islam is reeling, it must be admitted that both phases were necessary as essential items in the ordered progress of a new era that is dawning upon the East. There was a time in the history of the Islamic people when an unqualified submission to authority of one man—as King—and a small coterie—as spiritual guides—were invaluable items for the cohesion of Islamic states, when battles for liberty and progress were fought by these two elements alone, and the man in the street

did not need to have realities brushing him too close, for consolidation of a movement can only be achieved in certain circumstances under dictatorship, and those conditions obtained at that stage of Islamic cultural evolution in Asia. Likewise the "*material civilization of the West*" as it broke wave after wave upon the old fortress of the Orient was merely a progress which could not brook antagonism for long, as the economic forces of the world through the march of time have reduced all countries to a stage of self-insufficiency and produced a state of interdependence, hence the reason of a Western impact. With these apologies, however, one can qualify both influences, but the interesting fact remains that their advent and existence, notwithstanding the Muslim mentality, has arrived at a pass when there is a distinct call backward—not a retrogression in the sense of medievalism but a reversion to the original faith, to its real essence and true purpose.

If the efforts of the revivalists are beating back the book-lore of the Mullahs to the wall, and the awakened ideas of Young Islam are calculated to strengthen the faith of the Prophet in what manner is the plethora of events in New Turkey, for an instance, reconcilable with this great attempt at the world-wide cohesion of Islam? In a word, does the action of the Angora Nationalists not amount to a revolt against the religion of their fathers? To those students of the Near and Middle East who have

closely watched the development of ideas in New Turkey, it is patent that it is not a revolt; rather it is an attempt to withstand European competition, for ever since the fall of Sultan Abdul Hamid, if not earlier, economic forces were driving so close in Turkey that it became apparent that if that nation was to progress or indeed allowed to retain its identity in Europe or even in Asia, European tactics were to be learned and the West can best be fought with the methods of the West.

The late war and what followed in Asia Minor after it, merely served to emphasise the truism of that contention; and Turkey leaped into the arena armed with the weapons of Europe and obviously imported Western culture also. The one thought that filled her mind was to set her house in order and to defend it at all cost. The office of the Khalifate, which carried the nefarious heritage of political intrigue in Turkey was charred to a cinder under the hot glow of nationalism.

When, on March 1st, 1924, Mustafa Kemal Pasha at the Fifth Annual Session of the Assembly announced that the Khalifate had been stripped of all significant power and therefore being functionless was to be abolished, there was an uproar in less informed Muslim quarters. It was thought that it was tantamount to destroying Turkey as the centre of the Islamic authority, and that as the Khalifate had a unifying effect the removal of the office would shake the

very foundation of the faith. That both were fallacies was abundantly proved by what followed. In the first place, the contemporary history of Islam does not show a single instance wherein the Shiekhul—Islam or the Khalifa had exercised any decided authority over the Muslims. During the Turkoman massacre by Scobeloff in Central Asia, the reduction of the Khanates of Khiva and Bokhara and absorption of Khokand, the bombardment of the sacred shrines of Meshad in Persia, the difficulties of Egypt and Morocco, the Sultan's voice may have been raised but in actual manifestation no influence was exercised. Then amongst the subject races under Abdul Hamid's Government, the Sultan may have been obeyed as a King but his appeal in the name of Khalifate carried not an atom of authority. The proclamation of Jihad at Constantinople in the beginning of the War reduced the myth to a mere shadow. The foregoing answers the question automatically as to whether the strength of Islam really lay in that Khalifate which was reposed in the Turkish Khalifate of the last century. The happenings of the present era have attested, as indeed they have proved time and again throughout more than a millennium of Islam's existence, that the cohesion and the life sap of the Mecca doctrine is not tied to the individuals in particular circumstances. If that would have been so then Islam would have been found wanting as a code of morality and could not have continued to retain the glad assent

of so large a section of the human race for close upon fourteen centuries.

The recent alarm of the Turkish Governor at Constantinople over Christian missions, their declaration of Islam as the official religion of the State, their representation at the Court of the Wahabi King, and their eagerness to perform pilgrimage to Mecca are sufficient facts to dispel any doubts against Turkey of to-day. There is no justification of an idea of revolt, if symptomatic of anything at all, the attempt of the Turks to cast off worn-out social customs is symptomatic of a fresh attitude of mind which judges every secular idea in terms not of its age, but in those of its utility in a changing world, where sentiment has given place to value. And, therefore, the Turks are not revolutionaries of Islam but as advanced guards of a school of modernists of the faith who sincerely desire the strengthening of the cult of the Prophet.

It will now be seen that throughout the entire Muslim field various groups are operating towards that one goal. Their respective efforts must essentially be guided by the conditions prevailing in their local areas and that attempt is spelt in terms of reformation, it is a march out of the Middle Ages of traditionalism and authority which was so long impeded by the clergy of Islam. There are various tendencies, however, to seek new interpretations from the Quran, but the one which has admittedly caught the imagina-

tion of a large body of young thinkers devotes its ideas on *the purpose of Creation, the conception of good and evil, and life after death*. In certain aspects the Sufi doctrines have also been harnessed to the aid of the new idea; for instance, beginning with a profound belief in the existence of God the Prophet and His Book—the Quran—some have thought that the purpose of Creation is centred round human happiness, since man is the noblest example of Allah's creation. To enfold all this panorama of life the Creator meant to manifest his great skill and see man in it enjoy and appreciate the masterful craftsmanship of his Creator, and be happy. Whosoever interfered in that progress of happiness was sinful and must atone for it.

Man is created to further, in his limited capacity, the progress of that great scheme of happiness; and happiness is defined not only by the satisfaction of animal desires, food, drink and so forth, but also more in the sense that it satisfies the higher instincts. It is a happy blending of materialism with mysticism. When the allotted work of a man—in making himself and others happy—has been done, he has acquired a certain degree of excellence, a particle of God, and is ready to move forward to a different field of operation. Quite new interpretations are advanced regarding the life after death, and there is a definite revolt against the cavernous depths where the sinner will be cast amidst the furnace of Hell. Instead it is

sometimes contended that the Soul merely passes from one sphere to another, and reason of the spirit losing all contact with Earth is not infrequently given that those Creations have passed beyond and are a step further up, working their way to the pinnacle of perfection, and even if they communicated with us, it would be incomprehensible to the average mind, because of its lower attainments, and material implications.

CHAPTER XI

THE SPIRIT OF PERSIAN POETRY

FOR SOME generations the poetry of Persia, that rose of the Eastern imagination, has intrigued the finer literary sentiment of the Western world and has, through the medium of translation, spread its perfume over the green meadows of European literary thought. To the best in English letters FitzGerald seemed not only the gate of a new poetical paradise but quickened that feeling of gentle pessimism which Tennyson and Rossetti had lightly implanted in the English mind. But seasoned Persian scholars demurred at the freedom of FitzGerald's interpretations, and it was generally agreed that his Omar was scarcely the Omar of Ormuzd, especially so far as its spirit was concerned, although it retained much of the richness and temperament of the Orient.

But the reconciliations of mere translation will continue to fail in lending the European a just or precise view of Persian poetry as a whole until such time as he appreciates the salient fact that what he regards as poetry finds but little reflection in the metres of the East. The extraordinarily luscious and

sensuous character of most Eastern verse has long been regarded as inimical to poetic expression in England, and the pale cast of thought now so prevalent in English and American verse is the very antithesis of the spirit of Eastern song, which admits and even revels in philosophic sententiousness, but derides its presentation in what it considers the bare and meagre forms of the more starkly-minded West. The divine enthusiasm of the Sufist poetry, Europe regards as "a babbling of the soul" without reason, if not wanting in rhyme, while the constant appeal to fancy, as opposed to true poetic utterance or imagination, which in too many instances marks Persian taste, appears to it as allied to the mere "wit" of what Shelley, in one of his last letters, called "the old punning poets." Robust English criticism now condemns mere phantasy, and sees no possibility of alliance between it and veridical poetical expression, while Persian criticism, on the other hand, extols verbal ingenuity and euphuism, which it freely intermingles with what it believes to be poetic utterance of the highest order—to the confusion of the European mind.

The old Sufi poets of Persia have been described as "souls drunken with the love of God." "Truly," says the Prophet, "there is in eloquence a magic and in poetry a wisdom." But in the Sufist utterance this wisdom takes on the guise of a mysticism probably unequalled in even the profoundest speech of European poetry, the utterance of a love divine which

is perhaps most familiar in its terms and nature to Europeans through such Scriptural examples as "The Song of Solomon."

But beyond the mystical and religious poetry of the Sufis, Persian poetry bears a general likeness to one European poetical system, a comparison with which may assist Englishmen in conceiving a more precise notion of its general scope. The Provençal poetry of mediæval France unquestionably drew much of its form and method from that of the Moors of Spain, and in its formal but rich beauty, its tradition of love and its conservative metres may in many respects be likened to the minor verse of Persia. It is, indeed, a poorer and less gorgeous reflection of the verse of the Orient, a *hortus siccus* mimicking the more flamboyant garden of Gulistan, the falsetto to the Persian *tenore robusto*. Imagine it vitalised by Moslem thought, its chivalrous worship of the feminine fortified by the pious consideration of the divine, its somewhat pale colours intensified by the gorgeous imagery of the East, and you may conceive something of the spirit of Persian poetry.

But the true barrier to the European understanding of Persian poetry is its alleged "extravagance." Its warm and luxurious genius is wholly antagonistic to the more restrained and reserved poetic spirit of Europe, which it regards as cold and soulless. It surpasses in bold and ingenious hyperbole, fantastic imagery and emotional appeal. The Persian poet

heaps metaphor on metaphor. To the English taste he seems incapable of seeing that what might be intrinsically beautiful in itself may appear superfluous and lacking in taste when combined with equally graceful but discordant elements.

In the garden of the Persian poet English critics tell us, every flower is a jewel, every plot is a silken carpet, tapestried with the intricate patterns of the weavers of Tehran, and every maiden is a *houri*, each of whose physical attributes becomes in turn the subject of a glowing quatrain. The constant employment of synonym and superlative, the extravagance of amorous emotion, and the frequent seeming absence of all "message," of that large utterance in which the poets of the West have indicated how man might best grapple with the problems of the mind and soul—these are the alleged weaknesses of the Persian singers. The true love of nature, too, seems to be absent. The Eastern bard enamels his theme with the meticulous care of a jeweller. Not content with painting the lily, he burnished it until it seemed a product of the jeweller's art. To him nature was something only to be surpassed, a mine of gems in the rough, to be patiently polished.

But do these strictures actually hold much of the truth? Conversant with the spirit of both Eastern and Western poetry as I am, I cannot but question their justice. One might as well criticize the climate and environment of Persia for being more gorgeous

and luxuriant than that of England, for as the atmosphere is, so is the people, and so is their thought, their taste, and the soul of their æsthetics. It is impossible to set up a standard of poetry, although its general precepts are, or should be, obvious enough. The tragedy is that so few, either in East or West, comprehend them.

Of poetry in its purest form there is indeed little either in Occident or Orient. Poetry in the Eastern view is a supernatural element to be captured by the spirit of man as messages in the ether are caught by "wireless" instruments. With "thought" it originally has nothing to do. It is the spirit of magic gilding the material things of earth, and lending them for a flash in time its essence and colours. But what might easily heighten the pale landscape and the sluggish mentality of the West could scarcely make more salient by a tint the colours of the Orient, or quicken its ardent soul. The East, through its very flamboyance, must have its poetry much stronger in power and effect, it requires it "over proof" in fact. Tropes and parallels, rhythms and hues which might rouse the poet to rapture in Hampstead or Boar's Hill would only be rated meagre and tenuous in Tehran. We have no use for your "light that never was on land or sea," not because we do not recognize the mystery of it, but simply because it is an alien thing, a thin effulgence born of the dim meres of your English poet's countryside, out of the mind of the Norfolk

marsh-dweller. English poetry has wings chiefly for the west wind, as your excellent Saintsbury has so well phrased it. To us it is as dim and tenebrous as to you our "eternal" rose-gardens and burning amours seem strained and over-painted. You resemble the Japanese. Your poetry is like a Japanese colour-print, the delicate production of a country of silver mists and wan waters, rains and lilies—ours is the fierce yellow wine of the sun, quickening the heart to the passion of love, whether it be divine or human, or else to its opposite, the contemplation of the iron flower of a cynical philosophy rooted in the earth of satiety. Extravagance! What do you expect? You are among men whose blood is at boiling point, even if they have learned to conceal it beneath a mask of indifference. For our mouths are trumpets and our hearts are fire.

And surely no critic in his senses denies that Persian poetry does not most emphatically breathe the spirit of that exalted thought which is of the nature of divine revelation, as I feel I shall be able to prove.

Persian poetry, as now understood, had its rise in the period of the Abbasids, whose dynasty dates from about A.D. 750. Arabic was then the official language of the country, but the art of poetical composition was practised almost entirely in Persian, although at first the forms of Arabic verse were imitated. But the borrowed metres were altered and adapted and the Iranian poets finally excelled their Arab models in craftsmanship.

It was, however, not until the time of the Samanids, or until about A.D. 874 that anything resembling real excellence was achieved. During this era the Ruba'i, or quatrain form, was first adopted, and Persia's earliest great poet, Rudagi, initiated the courtly style of panegyric later so much in vogue when glorifying royal patrons, and overloaded with flattery and exaggerated praise. In his work we discover the beginnings of that immemorial conflict betwixt Persian hedonism and Arab puritanism. But the great part of Rudagi's output is simple and natural in expression when compared with what is to follow. Here is an example of his "commonplace" style.

"Thy retainers in a battle are as tailors on the field—
 Though a tailor, lord of empires, thou would'st never find
 with them—
 For their lances on thy foeman as a measure they do wield,
 What they cut out with their sword-blades with their arrows
 they do hem."

During the Samanid dynasty the Shahnameh was partly rendered out of its early constituents into epic form by Dakiki, whose adaptation was cut short by murder. This period, too, is remarkable for the "school" of poets gathered together by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, which became famous for panegyric, in which was included much real poetry. Its chief luminary was the celebrated Firdowsi, who completed the Shah-nama, the legendary epic of

Iran, best known to English readers through Arnold's "Sohrab and Rustum." It has been denounced as "stereotyped" in its treatment, as though Chaucer, Spenser and most early English poets were anything else. But it is the pristine beauty and fire of the *Shahnameh* which appeals to the Persian heart, just as the fresh *naïveté* of Chaucer to the English. In originality and liveliness of conception Firdowsi is pre-eminent, and his moral reflections dignified and exalted.

"One thou exaltest, and givest him dominion,
Another thou castest as food to the fishes;
One thou enrichest with treasure, like Karun,
Another thou feedest with the bread of affliction.
Nor is that a proof of thy love, nor this of thy hatred;
For thou, the Creator of the world, knowest what is fit;
Thou assignest to each man his high or low estate:
And how shall I describe thee?—THOU ART WHAT THOU ART!"

But Firdowsi only occasionally gives us food for thought, as when he says:

"In the end all greatness passeth away.
It is a chase in which man is the quarry and
Death is the hunter."

Or in the conversation of Iskander with the Brahmins.

But the earliest didactic poetry of Persia must be attributed to Nasiri Khusraw, a philosopher who flourished in the middle of the eleventh century.

Like Bacon, he "took all knowledge for his province," and the fruits of his vast learning are contained in many speculative works in verse, the fathers of many a score of the same in later times, in which the vanity of earthly life is attacked. The following passage from his *Rawshana'i-nama* reveals the beginnings of Persian poetical didacticism.

"Know thyself, for knowing truly thine own heart
 Thou knowest what good and ill in thee have part.
 Discern the worth of thine own being, and then
 Walk with pride amongst the common run of men.
 Know thyself, and the whole world thus discover,
 Then from all ill shalt thou thyself deliver.
 Thou knowest not thyself for thou art lowly,
 Thou shouldst behold God if thou thyself couldst see.
 Nine spheres and seven stars for thee do service,
 Thou art, alas, to thine own body 'prentice.
 Go cast away from thee all pleasures carnal—
 If thou in truth dost seek delight eternal.
 Be a man! Care nought for viands or for sleep;
 In thyself, like wand'ring monk, go, journey deep.
 For viands and sleep solely concern the brutes,
 Whereas thy soul in thought and spirit hath its roots.
 Arouse thyself!"

However, the true mystical poetry of Iran had its rise in Sufism, a revolt of the Persian mind against the narrow Arab creed, the knowledge that God is the one reality. It stressed the mystical love between God and man, and the need for the annihilation of the flesh, were permanent union with the Godhead

to be achieved. It fulfilled practically the whole of Persian verse with its spirit, from Abu Said almost to the last.

But its ecstatic spiritualism was broken in upon by Omar Khayyám, who was not a professional poet, but an astronomer and free-thinker. Like your Thomas Hardy, he sang the power of Fate, which he deemed superior to Divine Providence, and the futility of all things mundane. It is unlikely that all of the quatrains as "translated" by FitzGerald were actually composed by Omar, and in any case they represent the various phases of belief and doubt through which he passed. He is by no means so highly regarded by Persian poetical taste as he is in England, and, indeed it may be said that his reputation has become more English than Persian.

At the middle of the Seljuk-period we find Anwari the central figure, whose Kasidas are regarded by good native judges as the best ever penned in Persia, although to European taste they might make dull reading, overweighted as they are with hyperbole and flattery. More erotic and somewhat cloying is the work of Nizami, who may be described as the second great classical poet of Persia, and who excelled in romances with a strong "love interest," "Khusraw u Shirin" and Layla u Majnun." This notwithstanding, there is much exalted thought—the sublime of thought as apart from mere philosophy—in Nizami, as in this passage from his "Book of Alexander."

"In whatsoever place thy prudence shall bid thee rest
 The light and the darkness will be at thy disposal
 Light will be before thee, and darkness be behind;
 Thou wilt see all, but none shall see thee.
 Whoever shall not stand aloof from thy commission,
 To him give light from the light which thou hast;
 Whoever shall hide his head from thine approach,
 Him consign to his own darkness;
 In order that, like a shadow in the absence of light,
 He may die away in his meanness and perversity."

Nizami's contemporary, Attar, is the Iranian La Fontaine, only his fabulous matter enshrines a mysticism the French allegorist never knew.

The Tatar invasion plunged Persia into chaos, but that does not seem to have affected the Sufist poet Jalalu Din Rumi, who turned his attention from science to poetry about the middle of the thirteenth century, and his *Diwan* and *Masnawi*, a kind of poetical encyclopædia of Sufist doctrine and legend, have been alluded to as "the garden of the initiated" Sufi. Although his music is rich and full, it is restrained and somewhat narrow in compass, nor has it the colour usual to Persian poetry. In the following translation of part of an ode from his *Diwan* we find deep and incisive penetration.

"Of myself I was created out of comeliness full of purity,
 my heart;
 I said to thee: Behold how wondrous is the beauty of God,
 my heart.

Thy slaves are a thousand suns, the eye and the lamp;
Without thy rays souls are in shadow, my heart.
There is an extreme beyond which no beauty passeth,
Yet thy comeliness and grace pass all bounds, my heart.
Fairies and demons gird their loins in service before thee,
Kings bow to thee, and the stars and the heavens, my heart.
What heart is there that beareth not the brand of servitude to
thee?
What branded sorrow to which thou art not solace, my heart?
At thy command is every eternal treasure;
What treasure is there which thou holdest not in annihilation?"

Jalalu's contemporary Sadi was a practical preacher of the virtues, and his "Gulistan" is well known through translation. His work is fresh and simple and replete with wise sayings relative to everyday life. He is more easily comprehended than Jalalu, and therefore more popular. Sadi is certainly sententious rather than "wise," but occasionally he rises to powerful statement, as when he says: "seeking for a compact with the Divine, thou mayest thyself become divine."

But far surpassing these, as the sun the planets, was Hafiz, who died about 1390. In vision, beauty of phrase and aptness of language he is the Shakespeare of Persian poetry, and though he employed its ancient motifs, he added "a new form and a new colouring" to all he executed. He was the last of the great Sufi poets, and may broadly be regarded as a mystical realist, enshrining mystical notions and ideas in songs

about common things, but always with the magical touch of the born poet. His vast popularity in Persia is unrivalled and has never been questioned or surpassed. Employing the *Kasida* and the *rubiya*, he excelled in the latter, which he rendered so perfectly as to make his work the despair of emulation and criticism. He is the lyric poet of Persia *par excellence*. Hafiz, like Omar, is a friend to wine and cynicism. Yet his "wine" is a mystical draught, as the following "Ghazel" shows.

"Again for a second time hath the wine deprived me of self-possession; again seduced me by its caresses and destroyed my self-control.

A thousand praises on that ruddy wine which hath taken from my face its sallow complexion!

Blessings on the hand which gathered the grape; may the foot never slip which crushed it together!

Love was written on my brow by the hand of Fate; the fate which is written it is impossible to cancel.

Breathe not a word about wisdom; for in the hour of death Aristotle must yield up his soul like the wretched Kurd.

Go, pious man, and reproach me not! for what God hath created is not a trifling thing.

Spend not thy life in such wise in the world that when thou art dead, they shall say only—"Dead!"

Intoxicated with "Unity" from the cup of "the old original contract" will be everyone who quaffeth the pure wine like Hafiz!

With Jami (born 1414) the great days of the Iranian muse came to a close. The general excellence of

Jami's work is proverbial in Persia, his astonishing versatility in all forms of composition being displayed in three diwans or collections and seven masnawi, known as "The Seven Thrones." His verses are ethereal, mystical, allegorical or romantic as the mood seized him, and if his style exhibits signs of decadence, that has in no wise detracted from his popularity. Jami was the last of the great poets of Persia, and perhaps the most various. It is when he chants of the need for man to seek God and God alone that he is at his mightiest. Men, he says, rush over the face of the earth.

"Yet they are never worn by the toils of travel,
Nor is there pain to their loins, or soreness to their feet.
But what knows anyone on what he bestows so much
labour?

Who knows to whom they turn their faces?
At every moment they show some fresh painting;
Yet in the Society of Painters they are nothing worth.

How long wilt thou give the reins into the hand of doubt?
How long say to everything, "This is my Lord?"
Like the Friend, knock at the door of the true King,
And cry, "I like not that which sets."
Dismiss every vain fancy, and abandon every doubt;
Blend into One every spirit and form and place;
See One—know One—speak One—
Desire One—chant One—and seek One."

The following, too, is not only strikingly beautiful but deeply symbolic:

"My head waves on every side to the wind,
 But my foot is set in the clay of Thy valley;
 And the clay of the valley in which my foot is fast
 Is better than the rose which has neither colour nor
 fragrance for Thee:
 Make me in this garden like a rose-bud of one core;
 Mark me like the tulip with Thine own streaks.
 In this path no gain is to be made but by singleness of
 heart;
 To be double-hearted is to lose every advantage.
 The blooming pistachio sees not two kernels,
 Like the double almond, to injure the teeth;
 Since the corn-ear nourishes a hundred grains in one
 bosom,
 The sickle cuts down all at a single stroke;
 When the single-hearted rosebud shows its face upon
 the thorn,
 It receives not a wound from its thousand daggers."

This brief review of Persian poetry and its greater figures will at least have served to make it plain that the essence and spirit of the whole is not so much a sensuous and cloying amoristic creed, as so many European writers seem to think, as in the main a system of mystical expression in which the central object is to teach the necessity for a closer union with the divine. The "Beloved" so frequently apostrophized as the Godhead Himself, and the "gorgeous" colouring which suffuses the corpus of Persian verse, so often condemned, is, to the Persian mind, the reflected hues of that atmosphere where dwells the Immanent.

That this lofty symbolism did frequently decline into decadence, that it suffered numerous lapses by its occasional employment for sensuous purpose and thought is not denied, but on the whole these are few and unimportant when compared with the great body of poetic material which remained constant to the high ideals of Sufist thought. Your Swinburne employs the Hebrew harp, but does he invariably respect the gravity of ideal which accompanied its rhythms, does he never use its rich music for moods purely material and even immoral? In like manner did many string the Sufist lyre to worldly measures, but that cannot dim the echoes of its vaster and more supernal musics.

The wonder-poetry, of Persia, even in translation, will richly repay the deeper consideration of English readers. It is a mine of spirituality, a shrine of richly-coloured faith which no man, to whatever creed he belongs, can peruse without exaltation and rapture, a palace of poetry replete with beauty and wisdom, whose magic casements look out over fair pleasancess and mystic plains to the distant peaks of the spirit.

CHAPTER XII

PERSIAN POETRY AND THE WEST

QUITE apart from that wonderful poetry and philosophy which characterized the Semitic mind of the Arabic speaking peoples, the true Oriental thought is recognised to be that which has its origin in Persia. For a critical study of Persian Literature I might refer to those interested in it to the works exclusively devoted to that subject, because the wisdom of the East has more or less adequately been interpreted by some Western Scholars in the translations of Omar Khayyám Sadi, Hafiz and others. In the following review, however, I shall concern myself with a new phase of Persian poetry which seeks to establish the fact that in higher aspects of spiritual evolution the Sages of the East have been extremely close to the approved philosophical thought of the West. In drawing attention to this facet of the meeting ground of the East and the West, I am breaking new ground.

“The East is East and the West is West, and never the twain shall meet,” sings Kipling with characteristic felicity and force. This assertion, it may be

admitted, is, at least, a plausible one, especially in so far as it refers to individual tendencies and experiences. Average Easterners and average Westerners, who come into accidental contact, no doubt find themselves "poles apart," as the English saying goes. Their habits of life are not the same; they appear to have different habits of thought, and a different outlook on the world. Consequently their impressions of each other are, when untinged by fanatical race prejudice, always interesting, sometimes novel, and, perhaps, amusingly odd; but they are rarely, be it borne in mind, based upon intimate knowledge or genuine sympathy in the wide sense of the term. Casual acquaintanceship may not be limited by Time; it may extend over many years and never attain the stage of real or intimate friendship, for mankind is prone to maintain those terrible barriers that separate mind from mind and heart from heart. We are all disposed more or less, to be tyrannized by preconceptions and first impressions, and to refuse to see more than may be seen at a glance, or, perhaps, to see more than we want to see. Besides, being very human, we are ever inclined to become slaves of such phrases as Kipling has coined simply because they are trenchant and make a marked appeal to our fellows, and it seems not to matter how superficial they may happen to be. This applies to Easterner as well as to Westerner. The clever saying is not necessarily final, or the product of clear thinking and exact knowledge.

R. L. Stevenson's impressions of the Chinamen on the American emigrant train may be cited as an example in this regard. It affords an excellent illustration of the human tendency to paint a word-picture which pleases artist and reader by its sheer novelty and cleverness and finish. "For my own part," wrote R. L. Stevenson in *Across the Plains*, in his charming style, "I could not look but with wonder and respect on the Chinese. Their forefathers watched the stars before mine had begun to keep pigs." (Antiquarians sharply question this statement, I am told.) "Gunpowder and printing, which the other day we imitated, and a school of manners which we never had the delicacy so much as to desire to imitate, were theirs in a long past antiquity. They walk the earth with us, but it seems they must be of different clay. They hear the clock strike the same hour, yet surely of a different epoch. . . . Heaven knows if we had one common thought or fancy all that way, or whether our eyes which yet were formed upon the same design, beheld the same world out of the railway windows." Here the impressionist is carried away by his workable theme. After all, these Chinese, who were not necessarily conscious of racial antiquity, were, like the other emigrants, just pursuing the heart-absorbing quest of wealth, as had done their ancestors who trod out those ancient trade routes of Eastern and Central Asia, greedier for gold than for knowledge. They had at least, therefore, one particu-

lar motive in common with the medley of races that crowded the dingy railways carriages, and, among them, there may have been, for all we know, an Oriental Stevenson to whom even his own countrymen seemed strange fellows. The literary Scotsman, it may be noted, regarded the Cornishman in the same saloon as eccentric aliens.

No greater gulf lies between the Easterner and the Westerner than exists between different classes of society in a single country. There is little in common, for instance, in every-day interests, between slow-witted Hodge in his turnip-field and the alert, calculating speculator on the Stock Exchange, or between the profiteer with an eye for the main chance and the boy-poet musing in his dug-out over a sad last beautiful poem revealing a wonderful soul-history, ere his brief but noble life is brought to an end by a chance bullet. Such men are surely "poles apart." Each would reckon the other, if brought into sudden contact, a strange and, perhaps a dull fellow.

The average Easterner is not a symbol of the East, nor is the average Westerner necessarily typical of the West. Average men represent commonplace conditions of life and thought; they are puppets of environment. Not average men, but men endowed with a capacity for spiritual and intellectual development are those really capable of representing their race and country and of interpreting the inner life—

"the life of life," as Shelley puts it—of which average men in all lands are but pale and sometimes distorted reflections. "All minds," says an Eastern poet, "reflect the Great Mind. Some, like a mirror, reflect the sun and rival it; others have no light to return, but take of it what they can receive, like a stone or a clod of earth." The intellectual life of a country is not reflected by its stones or clods.

A first essential for the sympathetic understanding of East by West, or of West by East, is Knowledge. "Wherein lies happiness?" asked the poet Keats and his answer was:

"In that which becks
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,
A fellowship with essence."

The way to Knowledge is similarly oriented. It is to the Intellectual and not to the labourer, or the man of affairs, the so-called "hard-headed, practical man" who may be, outside his narrow sphere, quite a stupid man, that we look for a solution of the riddle propounded by Kipling.

Are East and West really so far apart as Kipling would have us believe? Do Easterners look on the world so differently from Westerners that it is not possible for them to find a common meeting ground? It is really "begging the question" to set down such queries. In the only real life, the intellectual life, East and West are less far apart than some would

apparently care to acknowledge. "The Easterner is a mystic, for one thing," urges some confident theorist. But there are many Western mystics in poetry and prose, for mysticism is, after all, temperamental in essence. What of Blake, Carlyle, Browning, Burke, William Law, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and a host of others that could be mentioned? Plato was not an Indian, nor was Swedenborg, and the mystical Emerson was an American. The men who have done the thinking for the masses in East and West are not so far apart as are Anglo-Indian trader and native coolie, or as Thackeray's "Jeames" and his lordship whose clothing "Jeames" carefully folds and lays out as if nothing else mattered in life.

Those who would separate East from West forget that it is from the East that Europe has received the essential elements in its religious life. Nor was it merely from the "Near East"—from that wonderful land of Palestine, which "never produced anything of consequence except a great religious literature." For Palestine, as Western scholars have abundantly demonstrated, was itself debtor to Egypt, Babylonia and Persia, and even, as some would have it, to Buddhistic India, for traces of Buddhist ideas are, it would appear, embedded in Isaiah and the Psalms of David. Before Christianity achieved full sway in Europe, it struggled for supremacy with Persian Mithraism which, although overcome in time, has, the scholars assert, left undeniable traces on European

religious thought. It was from the East that civilization entered Europe, flowing along trade routes from the cradles of civilization in Egypt and Babylonia. The spiritual and intellectual life of Europe has an Eastern basis; what has flourished with vigour in the West is not necessarily wholly indigenous; from the roots rises the sap which feeds the blossom and the ripe fruit. It is not too much to assume that the influence imported from the area of origin is still flickering amidst the local fuel. Even science which is regarded as essentially Western, is Eastern in origin. Astronomy has emerged from the debris of Babylonian astrology, and the debris was not wholly cast off even in Shakespeare's day and still clings in odd quarters. Western clocks tick out Babylonian echoes, for time is measured on the Babylonian system. The very world is measured by Babylonian degrees. Europeans use the Egyptian calendar as adjusted and re-adjusted in Rome. Geometry was invented by Pharaoh's pyramid builders. The Brahmanic Indians gave the world Algebra, and the Arabs carried it westward. What ancient traders established the gold standard of currency? Was it the Egyptians or Babylonians? Who introduced the agricultural mode of life? What set of Easterners? And who but the Easterners first formed settled communities and built great cities with temples and palaces and villas and even slums? And who were the earliest seafarers and the earliest sculptors and philosophers and writers and publishers?

Who would be so bold as to assert that East and West are so far apart when all that the West cherishes is rooted in the East? East and West met ages ago and still meet, and Time has made the East in our own day the heavy debtor of the West.

The gulf that separates the peoples with skins differently pigmented is, in a sense, wholly mythical. Men in all parts of the world are prone to imagine that gulfs really exist. In the British Isles a gulf is set between Saxon and Celt, which takes much searching to perceive, and between Englishmen and Irishmen, and between Scotsmen and Englishmen and in Scotland between Highlanders and Lowlanders, and even in the Highlands, as the summer tourist discovers, between west coast men and east coast men. Among the Easterners there are many similar gulfs; there are Parsees, Hindus, Mussulmans, and so on, and numerous sub-divisions, and there are lands in which racial gulfs are bridged by the idea of nationality, as is the case in Europe. Between the Easterner and Westerner there is often found more in common than between two groups of Easterners. And in Europe East and West are sometimes more intimately associated than is one part of the West with another.

The Easterner who sojourns for a period in the West, with the purpose of devoting himself to the acquirement of a meed of Western knowledge, invariably looks for enlightenment, during his leisure

hours, regarding the intellectual life of the British Isles, not by questioning "the hewers of wood and the drawers of water," but by perusing the works of great men—the real representatives of the West. English literature reveals to him the soul of the English-speaking peoples. When he begins to peruse English literature, he does so with a mind stored with a heritage of ideas, fashions and leanings that have come down through countless generations; and, ere he happens on the light that shines here as elsewhere, he has to accustom himself to local modes of expression and to individual idiosyncracies. He must master the language to appreciate not only the sense of the metrical line—for he will inevitably begin with the poet—but also its music and verbal beauty. His first impressions depend very much on which poet, or group of poets, chance or a friend's guidance may place in his way. He may choose to begin with the very latest, and find himself startled by the materialism of Masfield:

"“ Splash water on him chaps. I only meant
To hit him just a chip . . . ’
‘ God send; he looks damn bad,’ the blacksmith said.”

He may turn from the "Widow in the Bye Street" and set himself to get through "Dauber" till an Eastern ray suddenly breaks through the squalor and brutality of a rough sea life in the lines:

"Then in the sunset's flush they went aloft
And unbent sails in that most lovely hour,
When the lights gentles and the wind is soft,
And beauty in the heart breaks like a flower."

An Oriental may find himself in "Comus," from which I quote, in a veritable Eastern atmosphere, especially when reading Milton's lines on a song—that since first perusal have haunted the writer's mind with a sense of mystery and beauty; they are not surpassed even by Hafiz for their imaginative and spiritual qualities. The lines I refer to are:

"At last a soft and solemn breathing sound
Rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was 'ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death."

Those Himalayan heights of poetry "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" may be found too vast for pleasurable appreciation without prolonged study, but "Comus," "Lycidas," and the shorter poems readily reveal a mind which appeals to the East as profoundly as to the West.

If, by chance, the reader selects Swinburne, he may be puzzled by numerous splashing and glimmer-

ing obscurities, and rendered blind or breathless by long, dazzling lines such as:

“Are thy feet on the ways of the limitless waters, thy wings on the winds of the waste north sea?

Are the fires of the false north dawn over heavens where summer is stormful and strong like thee?”

With relief he turns to the jungle of beauty in Keats with its vivid word-pictures, sharply and swiftly outlined as in Eastern poetry:

“Clear rills
That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season.”

.
The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave
An untumultuous fringe of silver foam,
Along the flat, brown sands.”

In Keats the “Eastern atmosphere” is often evident. He was a mystic whose religion was Beauty:

“Beauty is truth, truth Beauty, that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”

The Introductory sketch to my volume of Keats' poems is touched with a feeling of regret because the poet lived among the flowers and ignored the English reservoirs of learning, because he was merely a “sensuous poet.” An Eastern perceives that Keats was one of the most intellectual of English poets. To him Truth, which is God, was revealed by divine

beauty. He enters into this Beauty and becomes a part of it. In his "Endymion," so strangely neglected, he exclaims:

"Behold
The *clear religion of heaven!* Fold
A rose-leaf round thy finger's taperness.
And soothe thy lips; hush, when the airy stress
Of music's Kiss impregnates the free winds. . . .
Feel we these things?—*that moment have we slept*
Into a sort of oneness and our state
Is like a floating spirit's."

Keats was no mere sensuous writer. Like the Eastern poets, he realized that Beauty is the essence of the Creator, to whom he really calls in these exquisite lines in "Endymion":

"Thou wast the deep glen;
Thou wast the mountain top, the sage's pen,
The poet's harp, the voice of friends, the sun;
Thou wast the river, thou wast glory won;
Thou wast the clarion's blast, thou wast my steed,
My goblet full of wine, my topmost deed:
Thou wast the charm of women, lovely Moon!"

A deep sense of what may justly be called religious fervour of great poetic intensity pulsated in the soul of this mystical singer. His love of Beauty was adoration of God.

But of all the English poets with whom the Easterner makes early acquaintance, none impresses

so readily, so intimately and so permanently as the saintly Shelley, over whom some writers still shake their heads, because of an offence committed against a social convention, despite all the sorrow it brought him. An Easterner can understand this point of view, but he cannot understand what is meant by "Shelley's atheism." In the East the religious sage may be found, speculating with even more freedom than did Shelley regarding the mysteries of life and death. Speculation was in the old days encouraged, in the East, and it is still regarded as an attribute of an independent mind. Who can understand the truth if he has never had a cloud of doubt overshadowing his mind? All of us have been loitering in the shadows. The honest man admits his doubts, the impulsive man is no less honest if he insists on them at some period in his life and declares that the shadow is the only reality. Shelley did this, and it has not yet been forgotten by the orthodox who are "less forgiving than God and therefore somewhat ungodly," as an Eastern sage puts it.

"I never read Shelley because I detest atheistical writings," declared one of my English friends; another, a Scot, asserted, "There is nothing in Shelley but winds and waters and birds and clouds." Yet Shelley was in the real sense a prophet and a teacher of humanity, one of the greatest minds England has produced, as well as one of its greatest singers, if not its very greatest, not excepting Shakespeare. For

Shakespeare never wrote such lyrics as did Shelley and never revealed himself as a solitary pilgrim-thinker in the spiritual world, as did the author of "The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty." Shakespeare was concerned about human character. Shelley was more concerned about human destiny. It is necessary to draw this distinction because there are those who would deny to Shelley, as to Keats, those intellectual qualities which are necessary for the production of great poetry. Both were profound, spiritually-minded thinkers; they were also seers in the real sense, at any rate, in the sense understood in the East. A Persian critic would be inclined to place Shelley and Keats above Shakespeare and yet not fail to admire Shakespeare as much as does the English critic.

Shelley, far from being an atheist, believed that God pervaded all things. He saw the Divine Spirit in Nature, in the tree instinct with life, in the moving river, in the "still, snowy and serene" Mont Blanc, in the cloud, in the skylark, in man. Life was but an episode in the history of man, and Eternity was to him an enduring reality; he sings in the "Adonais":

"The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shine, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die

If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
 Follow where all is fled! . . .
 Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
 Thy hopes are gone before . . .
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together."

Light and Beauty were to Shelley manifestations of divine truth, and Love was God's beauty gleaming in the heart of man. His was a lovely and inspiring creed—"pleasant if one consider it":

"That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
 That beauty in which all things work and move,
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
 Which through the web of being blindly wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality."

Shelley believed in the immortality of the soul, which, as he held, existed before birth and will endure after death. In that wonderful poem, "Ginevra," he pictures the horrors of death:

"When there is felt around
 A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,
 And silence."

Death comes suddenly to his heroine:

"The dark arrow fled . . .
 In the moon."

He contemplates the earthly phenomena of death
with horror, not devoid of grandeur.

“Ere the sun through heaven once more has rolled,
The rats in her heart
Will have made their nest,
And the worms be alive in her golden hair,
*While the spirit that guides the sun,
Sits throned in his flaming chair,
She shall sleep.*”

But that is not the whole story of human destiny
as felt in the shadows:

“In our night
Of thought we know thus much of death—no more
Than the unborn dream of our life before
Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore.”

Shelley, like the spirit of his own “West Wind,”
searched the whole world for God and found Him
in the mind of man, the greatest of all Divine gifts,
for the gift of mind unites all with the One. The
poet makes this clear in his strange poem “Julian
and Maddalo,” in which the Count says to his friend:

“The words you spoke last night might well have cast
A darkness on my spirit—if man be
The passive thing you say, I should not see
Much harm in the religious and old saws
(Tho’ I may never own such leaden laws)
Which break a teachless nature to the yoke:
Mine is another faith.”

Then we are given a glimpse of the beautiful faith of this saintly and mystical singer of England:

“See
This lovely child, blithe, innocent and free,
She spends a happy time with little care
While we to such sick thoughts subjected are
As came on you last night—it is our will
That thus enchains us to permitted ill—
*We might be otherwise—we might be all
We dream of, happy, high, majestic.
Where is the love, beauty and truth we seek
But in our mind? and if we were not weak
Should we be less in deed than in desire?”*

Burns is usually referred to as a “love poet,” but Shelley was more truly that, for he sang of the Greater Love, the Love which is God. This love, revealed in beauty to the eye in Nature, was similarly revealed to him in the beauty of character and the beauty of the ideals of peace and justice. He dreamed of the return of the Perfect Age when War would cease to be and men would perceive that there are greater victories than can be won on the battlefield, that there are higher ideals than blood-shedding can bring to frail man.

“The world’s great age begins anew,
The golden years return.
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her wintry weeds outworn:

Heaven smiles, and faith and empires gleam
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream."

.

"Oh write no more the Tale of Troy,
If earth Death's Scroll must be!"

The difference between Shelley and the Brahmanic authors of the "Upanishads" is most marked in one particular respect. In the famous "Forest Books" of India, the sages are really agnostics. They despair of the human mind ever being able to solve the riddle of existence. They cannot tell aught of God except negatively. They know what God is not, but not what God is. Shelley is a seer with a positive Knowledge of divine truth. To him Love and beauty were synonymous with the Divine Being. He rejoices in the thought of all-pervading Love. The idea of Divine Love never occurred to the authors of the coldly-speculative "Upanishads" who likewise were blind to Divine beauty. The Brahmins realized that they could not sway the masses with their vague speculations, and they provided a host of gods and goddesses with as many attributes as there was need or demand for. But behind all their pantheons remains the haunting belief that nothing positively can be known regarding Narayana or Brahma, or whatever name they choose to apply to the unknown God. But Shelley had a definite message for humanity, and it was essentially a poetical message. He desired men and women to live noble lives which would

reflect divine beauty and divine love, not by the performance of certain rites, not by the organization of creeds and cults, but by thinking and living in a manner worthy of their ideals. To be "one with Nature" meant to Shelley to be "one with God."

Like the Easterner, Shelley had a symbolizing mind. He thought in symbols. In Greek mythology he found, ready-made, a host of Deities whom he spiritualized and glorified. His "Prometheus" is not, however, the old Greek Prometheus at all. He is Shelley's symbol of the human intelligence struggling with the chains that bind him, and the poet's "Asia" is his ideal of Eternal Love. This Love, married to intelligence, produces a new and better world.

Shelley's tendency to deify Nature, which puzzled his critics, including his wife, is manifested in that beautiful poem "The Witch of Atlas," which, had it been composed by an Indian Brahman, would have added another deity to the Hindu Pantheon. In his lines "To Mary," written because she objected to the "Witch" "upon the score of its containing no human interest," he compares the poem to Wordsworth's "Peter Bell," and says:

"If you unveil my Witch, no priest nor primate
Can shrive you of that sin—if sin there be
In Love, *when it becomes idolatry.*"

Here we have the keynote of the poem, which is no mere fantasy, and something more even than

“one of the most ‘poetic poems’ in the English language,” I never weary of studying the “Witch”:

“So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden
In the warm shadow of her loveliness.”

“A lovely lady garmented in light
From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are
Two openings of unfathomable night
Seen through a Temple’s cloven roof—her hair
Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,
Picturing her form: her soft smiles shone afar,
And her low voice was heard like love, and drew
All living things towards this wonder new.”

One reads with feelings of reverence, perceiving that the lady is the symbol of that Love which to Shelley was the Eternal Good. The beauty of the metrical music and the abundant imagery intensify the spell of the poet’s dream:

“The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling
Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,
Which had the power all spirits of compelling,
Folded in cells of crystal silence there;
Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling
Will never die.”

This reference is to Shelley’s youth, let us remember, when he had visions of Eternal Purpose which are not realized wholly in this life of ours. The Witch of the poet says to morals:

“Oh, ask not me
To love you till your little race is run;
I cannot die as ye must.”

She revealed herself in all that is beautiful by night and day, in the clear heaven, among the stars, in the ravine with its roaring river and on the summits of lofty and lonely mountains. She hovered over mankind by night. The poet imagines her visions in the wonderful lines:

“A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see
Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep.
Here lay two sister twins in infancy;
There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep;
Within, two lovers linked innocently
In their loose locks which over both did creep
Like ivy from one stem;—and there lay calm
Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,
Not to be mirrored in a holy song—
Distortions foul of supernatural awe,
And pale imaginings of visioned wrong;
And all the code of custom's lawless law
Written upon the brows of old and young:
“This,” said the wizard maiden, “is the strife
Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life.”

She gives dreams to the sleepers, and each dream reveals the character of the dreamer. Those worthy of her love:

“She did unite again with visions clear
Of deep affection and of truth sincere.”

Why this poem should be neglected, or regarded merely as a poet's fantasy, sorely puzzles an Easterner. It has more poetry and more beauty and more truth than can be found in a dozen of the “popular poems” so often reproduced in anthologies. “The Witch of Atlas” is worth more than many “Don Juans,” and is more beautiful than a Dauber, more human than an “Everlasting Mercy,” more spiritual than many “Idylls of the King.” One must go back to half forgotten Spenser, “the poet's poet,” for such a glimpse of:

“That sovaine light
From whose pure beams all perfect beauty springs,
That kindled love in every godly spright
Even the love of God : which loathing brings
Of this vile world and these gay-seeming things.”

There is much in common between Shelley and Spenser, although the latter takes a longer time to tell his story. Compare, for instance, Shelley's “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” and Spenser's “Hymne of Heavenly Beautie” in which the same message is given:

“Him to behold, is on his workes to looke.”

And yet Spenser is regarded by many as a poet who wrote musical verse mainly about such trifling and archaic things as fairies and ogres met by wandering knights of old romance. But the poets who followed him heard and understood him, and hailed him, as does Wordsworth, in his enchanting "Prelude":

"Sweet Spenser, moving through his clouded heaven
With the moon's beauty and the moon's soft pace."

It cannot be said that Wordsworth is neglected. But he does not seem to appeal to his own countrymen in the same manner as he does to an Easterner, that is, as a seer like Shelley, Keats and Spenser. He knew himself, to be a seer, and in his "Prelude" and "Excursion," which so many critics regard as "failures" because they forget that the poet's message is of more account than his manner of setting it forth, and that it could not be concentrated in a series of pretty songs. He required space for his great pronouncement to humanity—the memorable inspiring message he was sent into this world to deliver. A poet without a great message is a mere piper of empty tunes, a mere clasher of brazen cymbals, a mere idolator who bows the knee to Baal in the name of Art, or a noisy reveller in the train of Bacchus. The merely "popular poet" is usually the poet with least intelligence and smallest soul, the poet who strikes the right note of

mediocrity for business purposes, or who makes pretty phrases out of trite ideas fashionable in his age, or who glorifies the weaknesses and excesses of mere sensual passion which conceal the Divine spark by its formless exaggerated and obscuring cloudiness. There is no real beauty which is not a manifestation of the Divine—not the Divine who is a god of a cult—but the divine spirit which is revealed in beauty and love in the heart or in nature.

A manly godliness of spirit is apparent in all immortal verse. He who creates even a poem must bear resemblance to the Creator of all that is beautiful and good and true. Let us not have Art for Art's sake, but Art for God's sake—Art which interprets the Divine element in mankind.

That Wordsworth realized all this is abundantly shown in his autobiographical poem "The Prelude" which is, without doubt, the most wonderful autobiography ever written in any country. He gives his account of what Westerners call his "conversion" in the fourth book. It occurred during a "sober hour" on a dewy evening:

"Gently did my soul
Put off her veil, and, self-transmuted, stood
Naked, as in the presence of her God.
While on I walked, a comfort seemed to touch
A heart that had not been disconsolate:

I had inward hopes
 And swellings of the spirit, was rapt and soothed,
 Conversed with promises, had glimmering views
 How life pervades the undecaying mind
 How the immortal soul with God-like power
 Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
 'That time can lay upon her.'

Having acquired "clearer knowledge," Wordsworth saw a new world which was the old, for there was divine love in his heart. The artist in him had been awakened by a loving influence sent direct from God who loves all. Then he became godlike as he relates:

"I loved,
 More deeply all that had been loved before,
 More deeply even than ever."

Addressing Coleridge, he declares that poets had a message for mankind:

"Prophets of Nature, we to them will speak
 A lasting inspiration, sanctified
 By reason, blest by faith; what we have loved
 Others will love and we will teach them how."

These thoughts might well be translated from Persian or Arabic. East and West are more closely akin than some writers and travellers appear to realize, and this is particularly true in reference to intellectual life.

The religious systems may differ, and divergent views may be entertained as to which religion is the

true religion. But in the lands "somewhere East of Suez," as in England, the seer-poets who have lived near to God enable all to surmount barriers and reach those green places which form the garden of God. There all may feel as did the Irish poet:

"The stars sang in God's garden,
The stars are the birds of God;
The night-time is God's harvest,
Its fruits are the words of God."

In the "garden of God" are those divinely-inspired singers from whom we have much to learn as Eastern and Western children of the same Creator. In His eyes East and West are one.



THE GATEWAY OF TEHRAN PARADE GROUND

CHAPTER XIII

THE FINE ARTS IN PERSIA

THE DEVELOPMENT of Persian art is one of the most fascinating phases of archæology, for not only was Persia the scene of a very ancient æsthetic development, but she has maintained a lofty and individual place in the development of art until the present day.

From the ninth century onward Mesopotamia and Iran were in communication, and naturally the latter drank deeply from the Babylonian wells. Particularly was this so with regard to architecture. Iran possessed a plentiful supply of excellent limestone, and this was reinforced for building purposes with burnt and crude brick and cement which have rarely been surpassed for durable powers. The peculiar structure of the Persian palace, too, required large quantities of timber, which were procured from the forests of Elburz and Hyrcania.

The façade of the rock-hewn tombs of the Achæmenid dynasty may be regarded as the finest exemplars of early Persian architecture. In these the part played by the column is peculiarly interesting,

and might seem to have an Egyptian connotation. But this is not so. The shaft of the Persian column is invariably tall and slender, as witnessed by the remains at Persepolis and Pasargadae, whereas the Egyptian model is much greater in diameter. Again, the capital of the Persian pillar is constructed on a rectangular plan, consisting usually of a pair of carven bulls placed back to back. Moreover the crown projects beyond the shaft in a much greater degree than in Egyptian or Greek architecture, and the shaft is almost constantly fluted. The spacing of the supports, too, exhibits no foreign influence, indeed the proportions observed throughout Persian architecture are so original as to give rise to the impression that it was almost wholly of native development—an impression which is mistaken, as we shall see.

But if architectural rhythm was keenly and even delicately observed by the builders of Persia, rigorously mathematical symmetry was not so nicely recognized, and the massing and balancing of parts was to some extent ignored, buildings being scattered haphazard or crowded into one angle, as at Persepolis, in picturesque irregularity. The hardness of the stone yielded by the rocky soil dictated its use in large masses, and twelve to fifteen feet is not an uncommon length for a block. These were not fixed with mortar, but with iron clamps held to the stone with lead, or dovetailed. But the compartments were built of crude brick.

As has been said, the roofs were of timber, usually

cedar, into which the supporting pillars were mortised. As regards decoration, this was undoubtedly transferred from a timber-carving technique to stone. But, imitating the Chaldean architect, the Persian also covered his brickwork with a brilliant enamel, and his wood with plates of metal and elaborate coatings of paint. Having regard to the general character of Persian architecture, it must be pronounced a medley or mingling of Assyrian, Hellenic and Egyptian. It had little individuality of its own. It was a later rechauffé of other Oriental designs with a dash of Greek influence.

Indeed, the Persian architect called to his aid all the arts for which the older civilizations had been famed, Babylonian enamelling and stucco-work, the Assyrian use of gold and ivory, the brickwork of Chaldea, and the colours of the Nileland.

But the vaulted arch and the dome are peculiarly native in design. So anciently as the days of the Arsacidæ or the first Sassanidæ, Persia was producing these domed and vaulted edifices for which she has for centuries been justly famous. The palaces at Feringabad and Sarvistan, have the well-defined arches and cupolas so long associated with Persian architecture, and which is characteristic of many countries in the Near East, and that these are "Persian" in origin cannot be disputed.

Temples in Persia were limited to fire-altars in the outer air, in consonance with the usages of the

Zoroastrian religion. The whole effort of ancient Persian architecture centred in the palaces, those vast and luxurious buildings of which classical writers speak with ill-concealed surprise. Of these the most important remains are to be seen at Persepolis and Pasargadæ, the former of which must serve as an exemplar for us.

Situated in the plain of Mervdasht, at the foot of rocky mountains, Persepolis comprises various architectural groups scattered about in admired disorder on a vast esplanade of masonry some thirty feet high on the average. A road winds round the southern face of this and a superb staircase also leads to the platform. At the head of this stands the propylæa or gateway, of which two great pieces still remain, flanked by winged bulls with the bearded faces of men. Some fifty yards onward the Hypostyle Hall of Xerxes rears its shattered pillars, once a veritable grove of columns of the most graceful description, which formerly could boast one of those elaborate timber roofs already described. This, for living purposes, was screened by rich curtains and so divided into apartments. Farther on was the Hall of a Hundred Columns, a still larger edifice, probably used for receptions.

The general characteristics of ancient Persian art are certainly derivative. At the same time Persepolis dates from a period when both Babylon and Egypt had seen their hey-day, and Greek Art was approaching its apogee. Very many and divergent influences

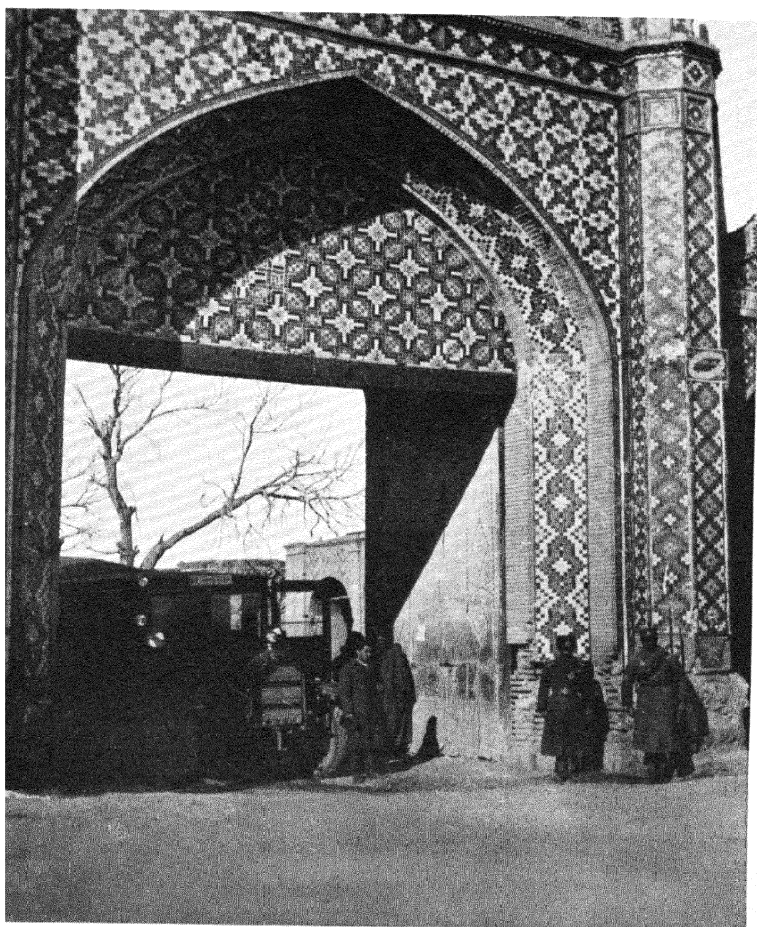
impinged, therefore, on Persian Art, but it may be said that Babylonia and Assyria gave most to old Iran. The large artificial mounds and monumental staircases which distinguished her palaces were certainly of Chaldean origin, although stone was employed in their construction rather than brick, and the technique of her brick building is certainly Assyrian. It was from Babylon and Nineveh, too, that Persian decorative methods were borrowed, and the situation of sculpture in Persian buildings is practically the same in its variation as in Assyrian palaces. The great colossal figures which guard the gateways are also Assyrian, as are most of the themes of bas-reliefs.

Yet the employment of the pillar in Persia is by no means Assyrian. At Nineveh and elsewhere it is subordinate, as it is at Nimroud and Khorsabad. But the large open halls of Persia, the vastest the world had seen before the employment of iron, challenge comparison with those of Egypt. Persia had, in the first place, probably received the idea of the wooden pillar from Media, and these she had replaced by pillars of stone as early as the time of Cyrus. But there is a vast difference between the small pillared chambers of this period and the enormous halls of Persepolis and Susa. It was assuredly to the conquest of Egypt by Cambyses that the idea of large pillared apartments was due. The Persians, beholding Sais, Memphis and Thebes, embraced the cult of the pillar,

and produced the hypostyle hall, with all its complex vistas of shaft and capital. Indeed, we know that Egyptian artists were invited to help in the construction of Persepolis and Susa.

Taking then, her first lessons from Assyria, and borrowing much from Egypt, Persia also accepted certain architectural tendencies from Greece. Towards the end of the sixth century B.C., when Persian art may have been said to have been finally fixed, Hellenic architecture and sculpture were still in the making, but there are signs that the Persian bas-relief owes not a little to Hellenic art. The movement and drapery of figures in certain of the Persian sculptures shows Greek influence, and Pliny actually tells us that the Greek sculptor Telephanes undertook work for Darius and Xerxes. But the part played by Greece in the making of Persian sculpture is perceptible only to the eye of the specialist, betraying itself in delicate touches and general suppleness.

Generally speaking, a critical analysis of ancient Persian art reveals that it was not of spontaneous native character, but a melange of foreign artistic ideas and technique. Yet it is not deficient in originality, as it not only closely adapted these but blended the whole into a style of its own. Its originality lies chiefly in the observance of regularity and proportion, in the great size of the principal edifices, and the extraordinary display of ornament. The great wealth and power of the Persian kings dowered their



THE KAZVIN GATEWAY, DECORATED BY MULTI-COLOURED TILES

artists with unlimited scope so far as materials were concerned, and there can be little doubt that artificers from half a dozen different races, dependencies of the great Persian Empire, combined to make a composite art which, in the course of time, like that Empire itself, came to possess a unity of character of its own. Again, it was well circumstanced in that the period of its evolution was so far on in the history of civilization that it could command much greater resources from the technical point of view than either Egypt or Assyria had done. The arts of architecture and sculpture had, by the days of Cyrus, grown so highly skilled, and received such singular opportunities from the power of his dynasty that it is not surprising that the results they achieved display a much greater finish than in the regions where they were developed. The architect and the workman had grown much more modern in outlook, and were more highly skilled. Yet there is a lack of variety and invention about ancient Persian art as a whole. But was this not due to the first hint of that satiety or even senility which architecture has evinced ever since, and which it only nowadays seems to be throwing off?

The other sites of architectural interest in Persia are at Istakhr, where the remains of a large edifice are still visible, and at Shiraz, as well as at Susa and elsewhere. None of these are so important as Persepolis, yet they are of sufficient note to merit

brief description. Istakhr stood upon a platform in an admirable situation on one of the most frequented routes between the Median tableland and the Persian Gulf, and is chiefly notable for the widely-spaced nature of its columns. But little remains at Susa except three great doorways. But we have an Assyrian plan of Susa, and a Greek description of it, which permit us to say that it was a walled city and the favourite residence of the Persian kings. It fell from power after the Macedonian conquest, but excavation has revealed a building bearing a striking resemblance to the hypostyle hall of Persepolis. Some of its enormous stone capitals are in the Louvre, and it seems to have covered about a thousand square yards. But it appears to have been almost the doublet of Persepolis. It had large fortifications surmounted by towers, and was evidently a place of great strength.

Sculpture in ancient Persia was, before the time of Cyrus, entirely dominated by the Assyrian model, and even later owed a good deal to it. It was entirely Royalist in its associations, and may best be studied at Persepolis on the substructures of the palaces there. The Persian school evinced no great taste for sculpture on the round and was confined almost entirely to bas-relief, if the capitals surmounting the pillars be excepted. But figures were often modelled in very high relief such as often approaches the nature of statuary proper. The colossi at the entrance gates at Persepolis are so obviously Assyrian as to leave no

doubt of their artistic origin, but the bas-reliefs in stone and clay show a more native influence, and even the sculpture on the inscription at Behistun has already lost its Assyrian aspect. But it was on the limestone blocks of the platform at Persepolis that the Persian artist achieved most individuality. On the external wall of the palace itself officers, courtiers and guards are depicted along with lions and bulls in processional and sacrificial description. The sculpture is strangely at variance with the style of building, with which it certainly does not vie in originality. In front of the great hall of Xerxes Persian sculpture is seen at its best, and consists of long processions approaching towards the central point and divided into groups by miniature cypress trees. They are descriptive of the pomp which surrounded the Kings of Persia, and wear a distinctively Persian costume, though beard and hair are certainly Assyrian in appearance. The whole is obviously representative of the population of the Persian Empire, the dresses of the various provinces being carefully limned. The group of the lion and the bull in symbolic form is also repeated without the least change of situation or of posture in the several buildings. Indeed, the general design of the sculptures at Persepolis is extremely simple. Even the sculptures of the gods bear a strong resemblance to each other, and there is but little mythical representation such as we might have expected from the pages of the Avesta.

Pottery in Persia seems to have originated in the time of the Sassanidæ. The specimens from Hecatompyles consist of hand-made, thick black clay vases, ornamented with rudely incised lines. A step in advance was made with red ware specimens, and in pale yellow clay, traced with brown pigment. Long before Persia developed a taste in pottery and learnt from Egypt, Phœnicia and Chaldea, she was producing pottery of Assyrian stamp, dull in tone and covered with lineal ornament. But early Persian ceramics are best represented by far in the enamelled bricks and entablatures with which her builders enriched the palaces of the kings with delightful azures and vivid yellows, and those warm and translucent colours which served to brighten the dull grey atmosphere of her plain-encinctured palaces.

Modern pottery in Persia owes its origin to Chinese models, which, however, it frequently surpasses, but it seems probable that the art was introduced by Chinese artificers in the reign of Shah Abbas, about A.D. 1600, since whose reign nothing of marked distinction has been produced in this art. Persian earthenware may be classified as follows: The finest, having a white ground with patterns in azure blue, made from a very hard paste, the designs bold and the lines freely drawn, with a pure and brilliant glaze. The earthenware of the present day is a degenerate form of this type. The second kind imitates less closely the Chinese mode, having a softer and more porous

paste, with a less even glaze, and designs not so well drawn. The third class is of a harder and denser paste than the others, with blackish designs on a white ground, poorly executed. The varnish is whiter and harder, and resembles the stanniferous earthenware said to have been invented by the Arabs in the fourteenth century. The fourth kind is a translucent white earthenware, somewhat resembling the porcelain of China, but with a hard paste, and varnished with a single colour, and there are others; one with lace-like designs, probably made in Karamania, and the common pottery made at Rhages, among whose ruins they are found.

The first and second types of the above classification and also the sixth are possibly of considerably ancient date, but there falls to be described still another variety, a paste with a metallic lustre, hailing from Rhages. As the city in question was destroyed in 1250 the debris found among its ruins must be at least of this date. But a similar lustre-ware was manufactured in the reign of Shah Abbas, some with yellow on a white ground, while other examples are lapis lazuli in hue. There is a remarkable absence in Persian earthenware of articles meant solely for show. Everything was made for ordinary, everyday use, and this shows how widely diffused were artistic tastes and good workmanship throughout Persia. The chief centre of earthenware manufacture was Kashan, where excellent clay is still found. At Koom a very porous

clay is encountered, of which unglazed water-bottles are made, some of which are most elegant in design, and ornamented with colour in imitation of turquoise. At Hamadan, or Ecbatana, a peculiar brown earthenware was formerly made.

The beautiful painting of Persia has really no roots in the ancient past. It is usually executed either as vignettes in association with manuscript poems or romances, or else on a miniature scale in the papier-mâché writing-cases called Kalem-dans and on small wooden boxes, and the objects depicted usually consist of flowers, landscapes, battles or human figures.

The best known artists, some of whom flourished more than a couple of centuries ago, are Saduk, Zamon (1700), Ashref (1740), Najef and Ismail (1820-30). The Persian portraitists had a remarkable power to catch a likeness, but art, as understood in Persia, is essentially art as applied to things of everyday use, and this it is which permits it to excel. The paintings incidental to the romances are often exceedingly beautiful, not only as regards their draughtsmanship, but in virtue of the glowing yet tender colours in which they are executed, and the subjects of some of these must have been handed down traditionally through many generations.

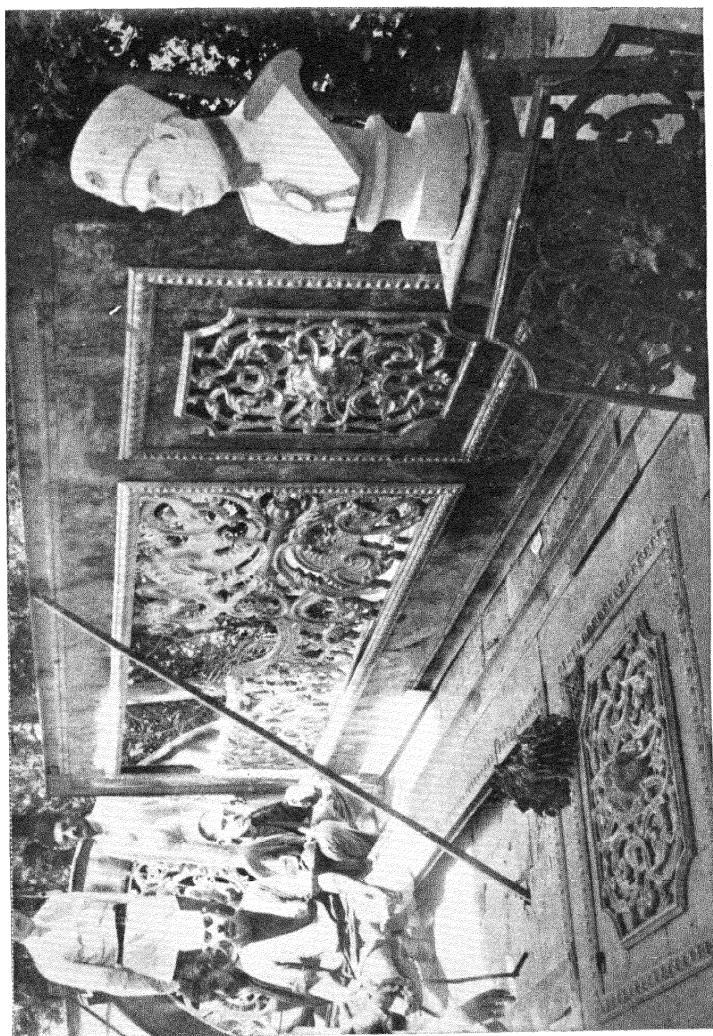
As in ancient Persia, so in mediæval Iran, the wall tile was a salient part of architectural adornment. None seem to have been made since the reign of Shah Abbas, and the art is now completely lost.

They were chiefly used to embellish the walls and domes of mosques and other sacred buildings, and date mostly from the period of the Mogul sovereigns of Persia, that is from about 1070 to 1300. Some are of great size, as much as six or eight feet in length, but the smaller were fitted together to form a mosaic.

One can scarcely speak of "modern" Persian architecture. The modern Persian building, palatial or domestic, has little that is strictly national about it. Indeed, Persia shares her architecture with Turkey, Egypt, and Palestine, and a Persian mosque or house might well be a house in Constantinople or Cairo. One of the finest buildings in Persia is the Madrasseh, at Isfahan, a cloister for prayer, a long range of buildings tiled in blue, enclosing a rectangular space, its enamelled dome reflected in a large pond. The Merdan, also at Isfahan, is a public place of great beauty, at one end of which rises a blue gateway and the turquoise dome of the mosque, at the other the entrance to the shadow-haunted Bazaar. The graceful little Ali Carpi, in its midst, is a beautiful flower-like palace coasting a hall of forty columns.

The Kasvin Gate, at Tehran, is a portal of elfin loveliness faced with tiles, blue, black and yellow, and the pavilion of Doshan Tapeh still keeps traces of its former splendours. The modern architecture of Persia relies for its effects chiefly on the colour-schemes of its tiles and the long shadows cast by the fierce native sun on the dry hard soil, on the almost constant

proximity of water and the vistas of trees which lead from the doors of the palace and mansion. It is, indeed, an architecture of environmental rather than of isolated effect, and this it is which lends it its principal charm—a charm by no means to be described in ordinary language, but rather in the glowing phrase of the poets who have so frequently employed its wonders as their theme.



MODERN PERSIAN CARVING

CHAPTER XIV

MUSIC IN PERSIA

IN PERSIA, music has attained a very high level of excellence. The musicians of the East all revere the memory of the Persian nobleman, Hussain, who to the Easterners is like Mæc (Mæcenæ) of the Western musicians. Hussain, living in the sixteenth century, was the patron of Hodjah-Molicycâh, the Orpheus of Persia, and his disciple, an Arabian by name of Gulam, too, made Hussain his patron. The songs of these two carried intense enjoyment to Persian and Turks alike, but as time went by these melodies could find no bearer of their divine appeal. They were practically lost till the time of Muhammad IV, when the revival not only restored these melodies to the East but brought them to high perfection.

The pivot of their great activity in Turkey was Osman-Effendi, well-known and highly respected in Constantinople, whose singular efforts are described as having achieved the training of several masters of eminence.

M. Mouradgea d'Ohsson has been unable to find any trace of this author, which Cantemir claims to

have given to Turkish music. He says that he invented notes for the playing of tunes. This discovery was apparently never communicated to the Persians who, up till now, have employed the method of beating the kettledrum to keep the notes.

Persian, Turkish and even Indian musicians have all despised and perhaps never had the ability to evolve any system of notation. Various attempts are being made in India at this present time to introduce both a system of notation and orchestral harmony. Most forward amongst all the Modernist schools of India is the Bengali school. In Persia and Turkey no such attempts can be traced as far as we know.

Eastern music, both for its appreciation as well as for its full expression, depends to an enormous degree on inspiration and personality. The transmission of music from master to pupil, orally, was the only method of preservation. How closely music was a part of Indian religious life is shown by Mr. Coomaraswami in his *Dance of Shiva*, and we also know that, historically, in the evolution of man, music was used in an entirely sacerdotal manner. This imparted to the art certain mystery and sacredness which did not encourage any indiscriminate broadcasting of music such as would naturally bring about a system of notation. This verbal transmission of music shows a parallel with the manner in which Sanskrit was confined to the twice born, and not a word of it was allowed to fall on the ears of Shudra.

There is no doubt that Persian music has great affinity to Indian music on account of two historical facts. The anthropologist and philologist traces innumerable resemblances between Avesta, Pahlavi and Sanskrit. Arabic and Persian writers again make innumerable reference to Pythagoras who, as we know, invented the musical art as it is understood now. The legendary tale of his discovery given in *the History of Music* by Sir John Hawkes need not be credited with more than its due. The same story of the iron bars and Pythagoras is controverted in Persian Books (Math-zanul Fawaid). The story points, however, to one fact, viz., that Pythagoras gave to musical art an impetus which was followed by Euclid, Ptolemy and, also, the opponent of Pythagoras Aristonenus. The Persians adopted the Pythagorean "system of circles," etc., and they call the science of music, the science of circles. Pythagoras, we know, had travelled far and wide, and his doctrine of numbers as well as of the transmigration of souls show his definite sojourn in India.

Arcemia divides music into two parts: the *Talif* or music considered in the melody of sounds, and the *Ica*, which is the measured cessation of the melody. The tones are called *awaz* and the semitones *nim*. These semitones are more numerous in Persian than in Western music, for the Persian interval is much smaller than the Occidental. The notes progress from one tone to another by extremely minute interval

and gradation so that the charm of Persian music is unrivalled by contrast with Occidental music. The Persians have evolved a unique system of writing their modes in a circle, and this method has led to the name, "Science of Music," being the Science of Circles. The spaces, termed *kiah*, are seven in number, the first being called *yeh-kiah*, the second *dow-kiah*, and so on. Occidental and Persian music run to exactly the same gamut, both consisting of eight spaces. In the Persian gamut, however, only the spaces and not the lines are counted, the last of which corresponds to the Western octave. The Persians impart a rather quaint artistry to their music by bringing it into harmony with a colour circle, every space is being identified with a certain colour and assigned that colour. Thus *yeh-kiah* is invariably green, *dow-kiah* rose-coloured, and so on.

The actual notes of Occidental type are not found in the Oriental, but their purpose is served by employing letters placed between the lines. The letters may indicate all or any of the directions needed by the musician. The interval at which he is to begin, the tones which he must run through, the duration of the sounds, the pauses, the time, and even the tone with which he is to finish are all indicated by means of these letters.

Persians are not prone to carry out these practices always in their entirety. Their music varies with its constituent modes as well as harmonious

phrases. The phrases are named after people or even places. With these as material, the artist is allowed to give full play to his imagination, to work upon his voice and gestures, and thus produce a thing which he has fair right to call his own production. The distinction of an artist depends upon his being able to allow himself the fullest freedom whilst never letting the mode be lost. For this, the more modes the musician knows, the less likely he will be to switch off from one mode to the other by unconsciously introducing notes belonging to different modes. No reputation is strong enough to withstand such a charge of plagiarism when justly levelled at its holder.

The most melodious mode is *Zenkelch*, and *Ecchae* is devoted to war songs. The recitation of *Shahnama* is done in *rast*. Love songs are composed in *buzurk*, eulogies in *Zyr-afkend*, and hymns for the dead in *rahavi*. When the term *Zer-Kechi* is used in connection with a mode it denotes its richness or beauty.

Persian music has no notes, but a method is adopted by which this defect is supplied. The measure is beaten by a man either on his knee or on a sort of kettledrum called *naccareh*.

An inspired and skilful musician has a marvellous command of variations which, apparently similar, have all an entirely different appeal. Though he never leaves his measure, he goes through so many variants that, to an uninitiated ear, the time may be unrecog-

nizable. Though foreigners at times have been unable to appreciate the beauty of Persian music, counting it as merely appealing to the senses and in no way concerned with the sap-springs of the human heart, with all its passions and longings, that is due mostly to the extreme subtlety of all Oriental and especially Persian music, which can only be experienced by training and habituating oneself.

The Persians are successful to a great extent in harmony music. The orchestral music of the West, employing different parts, from bass to alto, varying them by different combinations—the counterpoint of sounds—is unknown to Persian musicians. They do not divide their tones into different parts and have thirds, fifths or octaves, like the Occidentals.

The Persian band employs all instruments in playing the same tune, i.e. in unison. All or most Oriental music does not introduce harmony and discord which the Westerners have employed with such vigorous effect. *Melody* is the Persian forte.

Instruments: Stringed instruments, “aoud.”

Wind instruments, “nefir.”

Beaten instruments, “thabl.”

The modern Persian orchestra is composed of three persons. The singer is accompanied by the *sitar* player and also by the *dunbak*, the former being a stringed instrument and the latter a kind of drum.

Dancing boys, too, are a feature not to be underrated, for they assume elaborate postures throughout the singing. The rapture that at times is incited among the audience by the orchestra combined with the subtle personally symbolic significance of the words has been known to send people into an uncontrollable movement of limbs. They will all get up and dance round, hand in hand, till sheer exhaustion compels them to stop.

Persians have innumerable instruments, a long list of which is to be found in the "Unftah-ul Ubun" of Abu Abdallah b. Muhammed b. Yusuf Khwarazmi's edition of Van Vloten (Leyden), but they may be conveniently divided into three classes: wind, stringed, and beaten instruments. The drum of the West was introduced into Europe by the Arabs, who make innumerable uses of this both for war and for public announcements and even for marriages. Miftah ul Ulsom mentions even an organ. It must have been something like the hydraulic organ, treated in *The History of Music*, by Sir John Hawkins.

Amongst the stringed instruments we have the *tamboura* or *bagloma*, an instrument of the lute class having a circular body, a long frilled neck and three to four strings. It must be distinguished from the *tamboura*, a kind of large drum, and from the *tamburin*, which is a variety of drum used in Egypt and Provence. The Persian *tamboura* has three strings, two of steel and one of brass; also of catgut; catgut

strings make the sounds sharper, as they are fastened round the handle.

Shehzad, the other remarkably-shaped stringed instrument has eight and, at times, nine strings. When eight they accord in pairs, but when nine the last three are in accord. The *rebab* has at times three or four strings, though usually only two, one being tuned a third higher than the other. Its capacity for giving an extremely sweet sound, when well played, surpasses any other stringed instrument.

Most of the stringed instruments of Persia closely resemble the Turkish and Indian instruments of the same type. We may mention one more notable Persian stringed instrument called *chartar* which is played like shehzad with a bow.

Nafir is the name given to the instrument of the wind class. The ordinary nafir is quite small, and its sound, though high-pitched, is capable of being enjoyable. The other wind instrument, *carhana*, varies in size, and is sometimes as long as eight feet, and then it is necessary to have someone to support it so that the musician can blow it. It provides a kind of bass to the music, and its sound is quite pleasant. The wind instruments are all trumpet-shaped; the above being straight, while the *shak-nafir* is a curved trumpet of copper and very big in size, and *musicar* is a kind of horn.

The Persian drums are varied, but it appears that most of them have been imported from India: the

dembal certainly came from Hindustan. It is a *dholak*, and *naccarah* consisting of a couple of kettledrums joined together, that resembles the *tabla* of India. The military drum of Persia is called *dohol*, being circular, with skin stretched on both sides. When caravans are ready to depart, or when the Army movements are to be performed, the drum *kous*, five feet high and nine or ten in circumference, is used. The falcon drum, used for calling the falcon back, is carried by persons of distinction, not even excepting the King himself, on the left side of the saddle, and is called *thabli-baz*. The earthenware pot drum, used by country people, is called *dambek*. Tabors are of two kinds—the *def* with rings, and *daireh* with tiny bells.

Cymbals and bells sometimes form a part of the orchestra and dance.

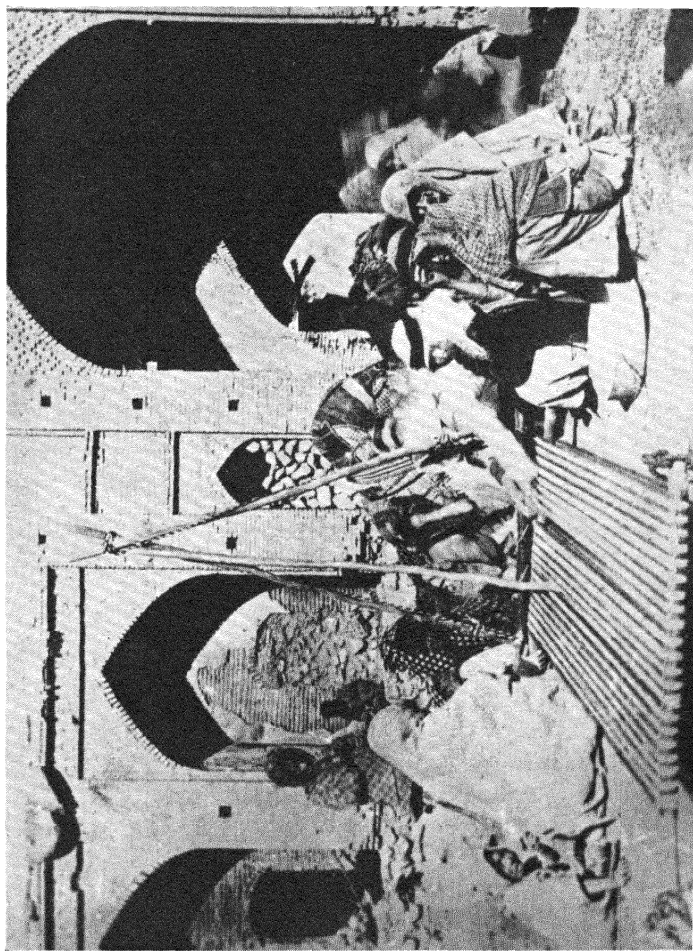
CHAPTER XV

PERSIAN CARPETS

THE USE of Persian carpets in Western homes is not entirely due to what may almost be described as a "craze" to possess something different from what is generally used by others. These rugs have a very decided value as floor covering. Over a polished floor a few rugs are thrown here and there, and can be cleaned with greater ease than heavy carpets which are nailed down.

In Persia, of course, rugs are in use in every house; indeed, they are the only floor covering, for chairs are not much in demand. For generations, people, not only in Persia but practically in the entire East, have sat on the floor, carpeted with rugs. Evidence of rugs being used in Persia goes back to the time of Cyrus, when his tomb was covered by Babylonian carpets, and probably the art was known even earlier than 2400 B.C.

The real value of a Persian carpet depends not on any one aspect: many points are to be taken into consideration. In design it must be of true Persian character; its texture and size are also important



AN OUTDOOR CARPET FACTORY IN A PERSIAN VILLAGE

factors; whilst perhaps of greater importance is it that its more or less subdued colours should blend harmoniously; and, above all, no aniline dye must be used. As can be imagined, a carpet manufactured in Europe, for the most part, lacks these qualities. The employment of vegetable dyes in the case of Persian carpets is chiefly responsible for the fact that they retain their excellence, and even improve as they grow in age; consequently, Persian antique pieces command high prices, and are getting increasingly difficult to procure. An excellent example of this can be found in the Ardebil carpet measuring thirty-four feet by seventeen feet six inches, woven in A.D. 1536 in Kashan, and bought by the South Kensington Museum, London, for £6,000; but the record for high prices was created by an American who paid about £12,000 for one single piece.

Knowledge concerning rugs has not kept pace with the demand for Persian antique carpets and, therefore, it might be as well to give a few details showing what constitutes an antique piece and how to recognise it. Seeing that it was some half a century ago that the Persian carpet-maker began to use aniline in place of vegetable dyes, a genuine carpet must be at least sixty or seventy years old. Also, prior to that period no weaver would ever use an inferior wool. When one holds up a rug so that the nap runs away from one, the genuine piece has a

glow on it, while, viewed the other way, the pattern stands out bold and distinct. When it is taken up in the middle and let go, it ought to retain the shape of a tent, and not fall flat on the ground as soon as it is let go. On account of the fact that "antiques" command higher prices than modern pieces, efforts are frequently made at faking. The colours, for instance, are subdued by the application of tartaric acid; a rug is sometimes dipped in an infusion of coffee to give it an old look; and occasionally the pile is besmeared with a little grease and made to shine by rubbing with glossy rollers or smooth marble knobs.

The one great thing to avoid, of course, is aniline dye, which destroys the wool. Vegetable colouring not only preserves but actually improves the wearing quality of a Persian carpet. A test for discovering whether aniline dye has been used is to soak the white portion of the rug, together with the adjoining strands of colour, especially if they are of bright hue. If the colour does not run into the white portion, even ever so slightly, then it can be safely assumed that the dye is not chemical.

In most cases, genuine rugs have no dates or even the maker's marks, so that in examining a carpet one has to rely on a knowledge of the different designs and colours with which various periods of the Persian textile history are associated. Some provinces, too, have special designs and colours for their looms, the

employment of which has been handed down from father to son throughout the generations with but little variation. At Tabriz, for instance, the carpets have a large central design, either round or square. The rugs from Kermanshah have soft and light colouring, with overcast dark wool on the sides. Those of Hamadan have a pole medallion with a broad band of natural-colour camel-hair wool on the border. At Shiraz, where the quality of the wool is, without exception, the best in the world, the *sides* of the carpet have twin-coloured wool with little tassels. The Herati design is characterised by the arrangements of *torunj*, or little pears, all through the field. But at Kashan, in Central Persia—where the output of the carpets is the greatest, but more skilful work is done in that region in woollen rugs—and silk ones have been manufactured with great success. Designs of bouquets and flowers are most frequent in the carpets of Central Persia.

By far the most common material used in making these carpets is wool, but goat's hair, camel hair, and even cotton and silk are employed in varying quantities. The best wool is procured at high altitudes, and the very finest is that which is obtained by combing the sheep in winter. In order to minimise the labour of cleaning the wool, a sort of small coat is put on the animal. Goat's hair, which is mostly used for the groundwork of a carpet, is not long, but downy and soft, and as it does not take a dye very

easily it is used in its natural state, especially in Kurdistan. In colour, the hair is pale brown and has a very strong odour. This last attribute I know only too well, for once when I put a carpet made of it over me to protect myself from the rain and it got wet, the nasty smell choked me, and I had to put it aside, preferring to be drenched. The long, woolly, camel's hair of Eastern Persia is much in demand too. A carpet made of it outlasts any other, and is exceptionally soft; it is also greater in price than those made of sheeps' wool. Cotton is used for warp and woof but not for actual pile. Silk is employed only at places where it is cheap; and although a silk rug is infinitely more luxurious than a woollen one, yet both its cost in material and labour put it altogether beyond general or commercial use. People expressly desirous of possessing one can do so by supplying the silk and paying for the extra labour; and even then, a silk rug never lasts as long as a rug of sheeps' wool.

To be fit for use in the making of Persian carpets, the wool must be sorted according to texture, colour and softness. It is then washed very thoroughly in running water. If there is a brook nearby—and in many parts of Persia they are never very far—one can see men, women and boys trampling on the sacks of wool as the water of the burn flows through them. Much of the dirt is thus removed. This process may be repeated several times and when, after frequent

washing, it is considered free from dirt it is dried in the sun.

. When thoroughly dry a little flour and starch is mixed with the wool and the whole placed in a sort of a large stone mortar and pounded for a time; then it is washed and dried again. During this process, though the wool loses quite fifty per cent of its weight, the price does not depreciate for prepared wool commands double the price by weight of what is called "raw wool."

When the wool has been prepared in this way, it is then spun loose or fine according to whether the yarn is wanted for the pile or for the body wool, and it is at this stage that it is dyed. The greatest secret of a Persian is his dye-pot. That secret he would not divulge at any price, and it is imparted only by a father to his son on his death-bed. In many cases the secret has been lost. The puzzling fact is that although the ingredients, like indigo, or madder, or saffron, are common-place enough, yet even the modern scientist has been unable to discover just what blending of colours it is that tones down the shades into a remarkable cohesion.

The method of dyeing is not without interest. The clean wool is dipped in various pots for a given time and then allowed to drip without the colour being squeezed out of it. The dye is fixed into the yarn by dipping it into an infusion of pomegranate rind. It is then rinsed in cold water and dried in the sun.

The best vegetable colours are blue, red and yellow, and here again a contrast may be drawn between these and aniline dyes by noting that, although they fade, they do so into the pleasing shades of their own colours; whereas in the case of chemical dyes one colour often changes to a totally different one. Green, for example, whenever it has been produced by chemical dyes, fades into yellow, whereas the vegetable dye never does that. Black colouring is not greatly liked because it is, as a rule, procured by iron filings and vinegar, which injure the wool, and wherever black is found in an old rug, upon close examination it is the natural wool of that colour which has been used. The havoc which the introduction of aniline dye has played in almost destroying the ancient art in the Persian carpet industry was detected only some thirty years ago. A law was passed in 1903 prohibiting the use of chemical dyes, but, of course, its surreptitious use is by no means completely stopped: in those parts of Persia where the means of communication are not very modern aniline dyes fortunately, are still unknown.

Although the actual recipes for dyes are kept quite secret, this much is known that red, in Persia, is taken from madder, ground and boiled with pomegranate rind and grape juices. For blue, either indigo alone, or applied over madder is used. Yellow is procured from saffron or turmeric, and its mixture with indigo makes green. The Persians are very fond

of yellow and green. Purple and magenta shades, which are much liked in Meshed, are prepared by adding madder to indigo. The rest is a mystery.

The designs on Oriental carpets in general are always associated with some symbol; and Persian rugs are very conspicuous in this regard. The question as to whether these symbols have migrated from Babylon or India may be left to the folk-lorists: it is sufficient for our purpose merely to note what they are. The one great characteristic of the Persian carpet is the floral design. Occasionally one may find the Persian national emblem, the sun, lion and a sword, woven in the carpet. The sun is naturally borrowed from the ancient Persian sun-worship, the lion was introduced some eighty years ago as the emblem of a nomadic tribe, and the sword in the hand of the lion signifies that Persia is an independent country, ready to defend her freedom. On some pieces, combs, which are the signs of cleanliness, are depicted. Flowers are symbolical of happiness; as arches are, the emblems of righteousness, devotion and prayer. *Toranj*, or the pear, stands for plenty and riches. A picture of a cock in a Shiraz carpet is indicative of the superstition that Satan is of that shape, and, by weaving it into the pattern, the evil eye influence can be averted.

As carpet weaving has been a very distinctive art with the Persians, her kings, statesmen and wealthy

citizens are known to have patronized it all through her history, so that the "rosette" pattern so much valued by former Kings of Persia and especially by Shah Abbas, has been named after them. Another, called the "Sirdar" pattern, associated with a Persian of high rank, consists of vines and leaves and a gorgeous display of red, yellow and blue flowers.

CHAPTER XVI

PERSIA'S FIRST RAILWAY

ONLY a few months ago His Majesty Riza Shah Pahlavi, in cutting the first sod on the site outside the town chosen for the Tehran railway station, answered the call of the Persian people for linking Central Asia with Arabia. This contemplated scheme of railway development will revolutionise the economic potentialities of Persia, and will in no small measure affect the markets of the Near East. A railroad connecting the Caspian Sea with the Persian Gulf running through the most fertile regions of the land of the Shahs is a project which has long been the dream of all the well-wishers of the Eastern people.

When it is realised that Persia, with an area of some 628,000 square miles and a population of no less than twelve million souls possessed no more than 150 miles of railway up to 1929 and that her enormous natural wealth found no outlet, it is small wonder that her people deprived the ex-Qajar King Ahmad Shah after events culminating in serious food riots.

Apart from the economic tendencies of the Western world, the very fact that Iraq on one side and India on the other were pressing upon what once was self-sufficient Persia, could not conceivably allow this country to lag behind in taking steps to tap her resources. The present regime, under the able guidance of Shah Pahlavi, urged to this want, till a definite step was taken to construct a railway line on the Eastern side of Persia from Mohammerah, on the Persian Gulf, in the south, to Bandar-Guez, near Pahlavi, on the Caspian Sea, in the north.

Mohammerah, situated as it most advantageously is on the north-eastern shore of the Persian Gulf, is an ideal starting point. It is within reasonable distance of the navigable rivers of Iraq, and also close to Basra, which is attracting much of the Indian and Arabian trade as a gateway to the Near Eastern markets. Further, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company has done not a little to lend importance to this port.

The railway route will proceed from Mohammerah northwards, via Hamadan and Kazvin, to Rasht, and finally terminate at Bandar-Guez, with a loop line from Hamadan to Tehran, and rejoining the main line at Kazvin.

This is the shortest route, being about 500 miles long, excluding the loop line from Hamadan to Tehran; but an alternative route is also being very seriously considered, which, with a terminus at Mohammerah, on reaching Dizful would take a sharp bend to the right

towards Isfahan and proceed northwards to Tehran and Kazvin to the Caspian Sea. The great advantage of the latter route lies in the fact that the area of some 700 square miles which it would save would link up practically all the most important commercial, agricultural and industrial regions of Eastern Persia with the capital and the ports of the Caspian and the Persian Gulf.

The construction of the line presents great engineering difficulties. From Mohammerah there are not many obstacles for 150 miles, for a plain stretches northwards, until a chain of rocky mountains, intersected frequently by rivers is met. In the case of the line working straight up from Dizful to Hamadan, this character of country continues till the carriage road is met near Hamadan. But, generally speaking, there is sufficient room between the actual river beds and the rocky defiles for laying the railway line. Beyond Hamadan, towards Kazvin, the line will pass over Moran to Zenjan through the Hari-Rud valley, before reaching the plains bordering the Kazvin area.

In the case of either a loop line from Dizful via Isfahan to Tehran, or the direct line up from Mohammerah, a very formidable pass of over 8,000 feet has to be crossed, but, once that is negotiated, the remaining 130 miles to Isfahan are not difficult, for only slightly rising plains are encountered between Tehran and Isfahan, and the rivers are not formidable. The section between Tehran and Kazvin, some 100 miles, is undoubtedly the easiest part of the route as

it is practically level ground. A railway in that particular area is a most pressing need, for the coal-fields of Ardahah, Chamburak and Khiv and other industries lie practically dormant. The mining potentialities of Persia languish from want of transport. There are, for instance, deposits of alum, arsenic, orpiment, realgar, borax, cobalt, nickel, copper, gold, iron, lead, silver, and gypsum. These are not worked to any extent though oil and coal are there for the taking: transport, indeed, is the one thing needed to link up the raw material with the energy required. This great railway scheme will assuredly supply the demand.

The new Pahlavi Government took a step forward in the right direction when the Majliss passed a law by which it abolished all taxes on goods in the interior, and substituted for these archaic impositions a schedule of dues to be collected at Custom Houses. By far the largest portion of the revenue so derived is earmarked for roads and transport. The Government monopoly of sugar and tea has been abolished, and this alone is calculated to bring in no less than five million tumans annually, to be used for the exclusive purpose of railway construction. A German engineer has been employed to report on the possibility of iron and steel manufacture for use in the construction of railways, and an American expert in railroad construction has surveyed the projected line.

The agricultural and mineral resources of Persia are developing so rapidly on account of the security

given the country by the regime of Pahlavi Shah that the present means of transport are totally inadequate to deal with it. Close upon 3,000 motors were imported recently as compared with 392 during the previous year, and no less than 198 motor lorries and a number of trailers were also purchased for agricultural development. When enormous quantities of material are raised all over the country and need to be sent through different parts of Persia, over the road mileage of 3,000 miles, the urgent necessity of a railway in Persia is evident.

Work on the railway began simultaneously at the Mohammerah and the Caspian termini, one working north and the other south, so that the line might be completed with the least delay. Apart from the employment of native labour and the exploitation of her own mineral and agricultural resources, Persia has adopted an open-door policy towards all foreign assistance both in men and material; and, whilst no concessions or capitulations will be granted at the expense of the independence of the country, there are no restrictions in the way of those who may consider it worth their while to serve the great task that Persia has in hand. When this great steel highway between the Caspian and the Persian Gulf is opened and Persian industries are better developed and organised, the extent of trade passing in and out of the land of the Shahs may, area for area, easily equal that of India. Persia is still "virgin soil" in an economic sense.

PERSIA IN THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

No account of the modern developments in Persia would be complete without a mention of the connections of that country with the League of Nations. Persia is a member of the League of Nations since January, 1920, and one of the thirteen neutral States invited to sign the Pact as original members. She has been represented almost from the beginning of her connection with the League by Prince Mirza Riza Khan Arfa, former ambassador at Constantinople and ex-Minister of Justice, who was first delegate. The second delegate was Mr. Zoka-ed-Dowleh from 1920-23, and Mr. Abolghaçem Khan Amid, former Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Ambassador at Rome, from 1924-26.

Since 1927, Persia has sent a considerable delegation composed of Mohamed-Ali Khan Foroughi, former President of the Council and of the Court of Appeal (first delegate); S. E. Kossein Khan Ala, former Minister and deputy-Minister Plenipotentiary in Paris (second delegate); and Dr. P. Kitahgi Khan, Legal Adviser to the Foreign Office (third delegate).

The Secretariat of the Persian Delegation has been directed from 1922-26 by Mr. A. H. Khan Hékimî, first Secretary of Legation and Assistant Delegate to the League. And from 1926 until now by Mr. H. Khan Ghadimy, Secretary of the Legation in Paris.

Persia is represented at the Secretariat of the League of Nations by a single "member of a section" who forms part of the Minorities Section and the Administrative Commissions—Mr. A. H. Khan Hékimî.

On the demand of Persia and China, supported by Japan and India, the Assembly (of the League) has voted on various occasions a recommendation to the effect that it is necessary to take into account, in the election of non-permanent members of the Council, the main geographical divisions, the principal ethnical divisions, the different religious traditions, the divers types of civilization, and the chief sources of wealth.

The Commission which was set up as a result of the Extraordinary Assembly of March, 1926, to study the composition of the Council, recommended the equitable representation of Asia. The Council and the Assembly itself renewed their pledges to this effect and from then on, first China in 1925, and then Persia in 1928 were elected to the Council.

In 1923, the Assembly which had the year before, postponed the examination of a Canadian proposition with a view to amending Article 10, drew up a project for decision regarding the interpretation of this Article. Persia alone voted against this resolution, which, in consequence, could not be passed.

On this occasion the Persian Delegate declared that if he did not accept the interpretative decision which was being proposed it was "because Persia was

surrounded by nations which are not yet members of the League of Nations, such as Russia, Turkey and Afghanistan. If Persia has entered into the League of Nations," he added, "it is to safeguard her independence, the integrity of her territory, to collaborate in the work of civilization and peace, in order that a neutral country like ours may not have to suffer the consequences and the suffering of such a curse as the last war."

It should be remembered that on the 31st of May, 1920, Persia requested the Council, in virtue of Articles X and XI of the Pact, to meet without delay to consider certain acts of aggression committed by the Soviet Government in Persia. The Council proceeded to an examination of the situation, took information concerning the discussions going on between the Persian Government and the Soviet Authorities, considered the promises made by these authorities, and recognized the proper nature of the demands of the Persian Government with a view to the re-establishment of the territorial integrity of Persia.

The League of Nations, at the request of the Persian Government, sent, in 1924-25, a delegate of the Organization for Hygiene to Persia to study the conditions for organizing the combat of epidemic disease.

As a result of the International Opium Convention concluded at Geneva in February, 1925, at the request of the Persian Government, an Investigation Com-

mittee composed of an American (Colonel Delano, president), a Frenchman and an Italian, was sent to Persia in 1926 by the League of Nations. It was instructed to study the possibility of replacing the cultivation of the poppy by some other form of agriculture. The report of this Committee was submitted to the Council and the Assembly of the League of Nations in 1927.

During the discussion in the Assembly in September, 1926, of the report on the project of the Slavery Convention, the Persian Delegate, Prince Arfa, congratulated the League of Nations on having called this Convention, and expressed the hope that it would do something to abolish altogether that trade in slaves that Persia had already abolished long ago.

At all the Assemblies of the League of Nations Persia has always maintained a pacific attitude, and given expression to advanced views in matters pertaining to the spread of the influence of the League and those principles of justice, equity and equality that the founder of this institution introduced into the Pact. Persia has taken the part of such States as have fought the good fight during the course of the meetings.

Since the month of September, 1928, Persia has been a member of the Council of the League as a non-permanent member and till recently has been represented on the Council by His Excellency Foroughi.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY IN PERSIA

IT WAS not without some reason that many Persians viewed with anxiety the grant, in 1901, to an Englishman of an oil concession covering the whole of the Southern provinces and a great part of Central Persia. It meant "exploitation," the very word used in the preamble of the concession; it meant a great influx of foreigners, it involved the grafting on to the body politic of Persia, hitherto based upon the pastoral and agricultural arts, of an alien industrialism which had repelled those Persians who had visited Bombay and Calcutta. It also involved, they feared, the grant of a similar concession, this time to Russian interests, covering the provinces of North Persia, where traces of oil were known to exist: the economic partition of Persia seemed to follow as a logical result.

That these fears were not without justification may be seen from the outcome of oil development on a large scale in other countries. Mexico, a country in a

very similar economic position to Persia, floated to affluence on a sea of oil, and sank to decay and despair in the trough of the revolutionary movement born of the premature and soulless industrialization of an isolated part of the country in which the oil-fields were situated. The hardy Cossacks and of Don, and the stalwart inhabitants of the Caucasus, saw Baku arise in their midst, a mushroom town, without traditions or form, peopled by undisciplined crowds of labourers, alien to the neighbourhood, spending their too easily earned wages in ways demoralizing alike to themselves and to all with whom they came in contact.

Oil-born towns proved a menace even to the robuster civilization of the United States of America, and were, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, throughout the world synonymous with lawlessness. Even in Venezuela, which till 1920 contrived to retain the characteristics of an agricultural State, the rapid growth of the industry proved a menace to the social structure and showed that progress, measured in terms of oil royalties might be dearly bought: How Persia rose, by slow degrees, from the bottom of the list of oil-producing countries to its present proud position¹ without suffering from the ills which have so grievously afflicted the other great centres of oil

¹ Petroleum Production of the world, 1928 (approx.)

U.S.A.	121,000,000	Mexico	7,500,000
Venezuela	14,500,000	Persia	5,500,000
Russia	11,500,000	Rumania	4,000,000

production, is a story worth telling, however inadequately. Aristotle says that a drama ends, whilst an epic only leaves off. This epic starts with the individual initiative of a single man—William Knox d'Arcy, a New Zealander by birth, who, having by his foresight and energy made a fortune in mining ventures in Australia, turned his attention to oil towards the end of the nineteenth century. He met certain Persian subjects who had been seeking, without success, to interest European capital in Persian Oil. They had sat in the waiting-rooms of every great European Oil Company—they had sought American capital in vain. In D'Arcy they found not a committee, but a man; after long negotiations he obtained a concession from Nasr ud Din Shah, in 1901, and started work. By 1907, d'Arcy's great resources were nearly spent, but his courage and his determination were intact. He enlisted the support of the Burma Oil Co., Ltd. Fresh efforts were made—but without apparent success; experts were summoned to counsel, and one expert was sent to Persia to report. His verdict was unfavourable and a telegram was sent to Persia to cease operations and to close down.

But d'Arcy's chief engineer—an Englishman named G. B. Reynolds, was not inferior to his chief in tenacity and in confidence. To vary a familiar metaphor—he placed the receiver to his deaf ear—declared the telegram to be mutilated and uncertain

in its meaning, and continued to work "pending the receipt of confirmation by post." Before the fatal letter arrived oil was struck—and in great quantities. It was the 25th May, 1908. The news created but little interest in Tehran; some officials, indeed, were not devoid of imagination—they had at least seen Baku, and their fancy pictured great developments, but it told them not one-half of what they were destined to see within a decade.

The Anglo-Persian Oil Company was formed in 1909; a pipe line was commenced to the Persian Gulf, a distance of 120 miles. A refinery was built on the Shatt-al-Arab, and the stage was set for commercial exploitation. The difficulties were great, intense heat in summer, impassable mud in winter—mountain ranges at one end, and swamps at the other. The pioneers of those early days were exposed to sickness and pain, vermin, fever, and death.

By 1912 pipe line and refinery were complete and at work. It was clear that great supplies of oil were available; more capital was needed, but the public were not ready to provide it. The first phase was over.

The second phase, which may be described as the phase of direct participation in oil production by the British Government, was not less romantic, and not less pregnant with consequences, foreseen and unforeseen. The enthusiasm for oil for naval purposes

of Lord Fisher, his conviction that for naval purposes it was imperative to substitute oil for coal—at a time when no other nation contemplated such a step—these things are well known to all.

With Lord Fisher sat in council, as First Lord, Mr. Winston Churchill, at least his equal in imagination and in courage, and with gifts of resource, of foresight, and of forensic ability which enabled him to translate into action Lord Fisher's brilliant anticipations. Once more, in the long history of England, the hour had arrived, and the man. Of those days, he wrote in his book *The World Crisis*—

“A decision like this involved our national safety as much as a battle at sea. It was as anxious and harassing as any hazard in war. It *was* war in a certain sense raging under a surface of unbroken peace. Compare it with the decision to attempt to force the Dardanelles with the old surplus vessels of a fleet which had already proved its supremacy. The oil decision was vital; the Dardanelles decision was subsidiary. The first touched our existence, the second our superfluities.”

In that sober mood was authorized the great departure by which it came about that at the outbreak of War virtually all the submarines, destroyers, light cruisers and even the battle-line itself wholly or in part burned oil, a substance yielding remarkable flexibility in manœuvre, economy in construction and consumption, and unheard of speed—and yet a

substance foreign to the natural resources of these islands, and all but unknown within the British Empire.

The decision once taken, it followed inevitably that the strictest search must be made for supplies, and for some assurance of continuity of supply—and at a reasonable price.

It was Mr. Greenway—now Lord Greenway, of Stanbridge Earls—who, at this juncture, induced Mr. Winston Churchill, and through him His Majesty's Government to consider the possibility of making a considerable investment in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, so substantial as to give it a controlling interest, and to enable it to proceed with such developments as would make it possible to produce oil in quantities adequate to the normal needs of the Royal Navy. A Commission visited Persia late in 1913, and in 1914 Parliamentary sanction was obtained to an investment in the company of two million pounds of public money, subsequently increased to five million pounds.

Then came the War: the oil-fields were at some distance from the frontier between Turkey and Persia, but the pipe line was comparatively near and the refineries were on the Shatt-al-Arab, within hailing distance of Turkish territory on the opposite shore, whilst the Shatt-al-Arab itself from shore to shore was Turkish territory in terms of the Treaty of Erzerum, and so demarcated by a frontier commis-

sion in 1914.¹ The Shatt-al-Arab was not an international river: Persian ships had, it is true, free access to the river as far as Mohammerah, but Turkey could and indeed would be obliged, on joining the Central Powers, to deny British ships access to the river, thus cutting off the British Admiralty from its supplies of oil. It was, indeed, probable that they would go further and destroy the refinery: a short artillery bombardment at a range of 400 yards would suffice. This is not the place to describe the action taken by the British to protect the oil-fields and refinery in their own interests, but incidentally in the interests of the Persian Government, which is entitled to a royalty of sixteen per cent on the net profits of the undertaking. They are very fully detailed in the *Official History of the Mesopotamian Campaign*, a book of the first importance, which has received from publicists less attention than its merits warrant. My theme, however, is the effect of the development of the oil industry on the Government and on the people of Persia, and it is pertinent to observe that there would have been, in all probability, no Mesopotamian campaign, and the independent State of Iraq, which will in 1932 become a member of the League of Nations, would, in all human probability, have remained in the womb of time. But for the rapid advance of the British forces on the Tigris in 1915, and again, after the disaster of Kut, to

¹ *Near East and India*. August 22nd, 1929.

Baghdad in 1917, it is almost certain that Persia would have been forced to join the Central Powers; all the instincts of her people were anti-pathetic to Russia, and again and again she was on the brink of joining Germany and Turkey, saved only by that astonishing sense of political equilibrium which weak nations acquire as the best, and indeed sometimes the only, means of self-protection. Had Persia joined the Central Powers she would have become, for Germans and Turks alike, the highway to India and Afghanistan, the highway perhaps to the Caucasus and to Khiva and Bokhara. The Russians would not have abode in their breaches: the British, on the other hand, would have been content to remain behind their impregnable defences on the Indian frontier, protected, as it is, by great stretches of desert. Battles would have been fought on Persian soil between Russia and the Central Powers, and whatever the outcome, it would have been disastrous for Persia.

But enough of these gloomy speculations, falsified happily enough by the event. Let us turn to what actually happened. From first to last it proved unnecessary for Great Britain to send troops to the oil-fields: the Bakhtiari Khans provided the necessary guards. The pipe line was breached for six weeks in 1915 by bandits under Turkish instigation, but, these once driven back, no further disturbances took place, and the company were free to develop the field

with a view to meeting the enormous demands of the War. General Maude's advance in 1917 to Baghdad, and the subsequent occupation, in 1918, of the Mosul Wilayet, were rendered possible by the fact that fuel oil for steamers, petrol for mechanical transport, and kerosene for cooking and other purposes were available in any required quantities on the spot. Without these supplies of motive power no advance beyond Amara would have been possible—still less the subsequent advances to the Caspian and up the Euphrates.

The company's production on the outbreak of war was at the rate of a quarter of a million tons a year: by the end of the War it had reached a million tons per annum, and is now (1929) in the neighbourhood of six million tons. Royalties payable to the Persian Government for 1914 were some £16,000, by 1918 they were nearly a quarter of a million pounds sterling, and now fluctuate round the million mark, which represents about a quarter of the net total revenues of Persia, but is equivalent to an even larger proportion, as no expenditure is incurred in collection. The royalty payments are, in fact, the life-blood of modern Persia; without them Persia must have remained economically and politically little changed except for the worse, by the War; political changes, had they been forced on her by rulers such as Riza Shah, without the wherewithal to pay the military forces and the scarcely smaller army of officials, might have had

the same repercussions as in Afghanistan. Nor do the royalty payments, large as they are, represent the sole contribution of the Oil Company to Persian economic stability. A sum of some one and a quarter million sterling is annually disbursed in wages to Persians and in the purchase of raw materials, stone, plaster, and the like, for which no other market would be found. This "hidden export" goes far to outweigh the unfavourable balance of trade which has not only existed since regular Customs statistics were first published in 1902, but has steadily increased, the best proof that it is apparent rather than real. Be it remembered, too, in this world of depreciated currencies, that Persia has, unlike her neighbours and all European States except England and Egypt, contrived to keep her currency, which is based on silver, free from inflation. Many were the shifts and devices to which Persian Statesmen have had recourse in the past to raise funds for public purposes or private advantage. Inflation of the currency by an issue of notes or debasement of the coinage was not in their repertoire, and the fact should be reckoned to their credit.

The Persian oil-fields themselves have been described in oppular language by a man of science in a recent publication,¹ and with the many technical aspects of what has been described by an eminent American oil technologist as one of the best managed

¹ Williamson, J. W. *In a Persian Oil Field*, 1927.

oil-fields in the world, I will not attempt to deal. Rather would I speak of the human side of the work, the neglect of which in many countries has gone far nullify the economic advantages of industrial progress.

The oil-producing area in S.W. Persia, actual or potential, runs from Masjid Sulaiman, the main oil-field, nearly a hundred miles in a south-easterly direction to Gach Qaraguli: it may extend yet further in either direction; drilling has taken place without result 100 miles to the north-west in Pusht i Kuh, and 300 miles to the east on Qishm Island, also without finding enough oil to make it worth while to continue. Wells have been drilled at Ahwaz, fruitlessly, and also in the independent State of Bahrain on the opposite side of the Persian Gulf (not by the Anglo-Persian Oil Co., Ltd., but by a rival concern); water, brackish but not without utility for agricultural purposes, was the sole outcome.

But there is another field of importance far removed from the Persian Gulf on both sides of the frontier between Iraq and Persia, south of Qasr-i-Shirin; the development of this field must await the construction of a pipe line either to the Persian Gulf or to the Mediterranean, an expensive undertaking, remembering that the final cost is in the neighbourhood of a pound sterling for every foot of line. The main producing area is in the foothills of the Zagros range, in a region inhabited from time immemorial by

pastoral tribes—the Bakhtiariis, a people of mixed race, whose origins are lost in antiquity, but probably include both an aboriginal and autochthonous strain, and immigrants of Semitic race from Mesopotamia and beyond.¹ Their ancestors defied Alexander but served the Seleucids as mercenary troops. Indeed, the free fighting tribes in Asia have always appeared in this double light to their rulers; as on the North-West Frontier of India, so in Persia and Afghanistan, they enrol themselves in the service of law and order, or, with equal readiness, raid the countryside and despoil the merchants of the towns. The Bakhtiariis, wise in their generation, made the best of both worlds: they supplied labour to the engineers, and at the same time provided guards for the protection of the fields against all comers, but mainly against themselves, receiving, in addition to individual salaries, a fixed share in the profits of the exploitation of the oil-fields in the area under their control. The system, itself the product of intelligent opportunism on both sides, stood the test of the war, and of the state of anarchy scarcely distinguishable therefrom which prevailed in Persia from 1909 onwards.

To mould to the exigencies of modern industry such refractory material as is presented by these gaunt, fierce, undisciplined men, was the task to which the company set itself from the first. The process was

¹ Wilson, A. T. "The Bakhtiariis"—*Journal Central Asian Society*, July, 1926.

slow, but gained strength from year to year and *vires acquirit eundo* : to begin with, few men would work for more than six months at a time, after which they returned to their flocks, to invest their earnings and lose their acquired skill. Gradually a community began to settle on the spot and problems of health and housing came to the fore; carpenters from Isfahan and iron-workers from Dizful and Shushtar, finding employment regular, commenced to settle, their sons grew up and were employed at the paternal trade, but with a difference; they were caught young and trained in the use of modern tools, and put through an elementary apprenticeship in the use of lathes and simple machine tools. To-day the great majority of the elaborate machinery both at Abadan and at Masjid Sulaiman and Ahwaz is worked by these men, as well as by tribesmen, for, truth to tell, the nomad has shown a greater willingness and aptitude to take to machinery than has the townsman.

Problems of health were more difficult: at first the tendency was, as already stated, for men to come for six months and then return, the nomad to his flocks, the townsman to his city. This was partly due to the climate: few, if any, nomads had ever remained in the sultry foothills during the summer months. They went with the flocks to the highlands in quest of grass at the first breath of the hot summer winds, and there remained till the autumn. Of their annual migration a pictorial record exists in a film, shown in

London in 1926 under the title *Grass*, made in the previous years by two enterprising U.S. citizens, Merian C. Cooper and E. B. Schoedsack, whose book¹ is worth reading if only for the illustrations with which it abounds. From a medical point of view the turn-over of labour which this custom involved was deplorable: the health of the majority of tribesmen was perhaps the better for the change, but the townsmen were apt to return re-infected with the diseases for which they had been treated with success six months previously; affections of the eye were, in particular, numerous and distressing, and effective treatment was jeopardized by long periods of absence. From another point of view, and that a very narrow one, it was advantageous; the labour staff were bachelors, with a bachelor's standard of comfort, and content with a bunk in a communal sleeping apartment in winter, and with a couch on the grass in summer. When men began to settle down, they brought their wives and families; housing became necessary, and with it sanitary regulations: a proper water supply had to be provided, and a reasonably clean bazaar, where food could be bought. Women and children, who at first were a small minority of the population, increased, till the population both at Fields and at Abadan was composed of approximately the normal proportion of males, females and adolescents. To restrict medical attention to the company's

¹ Cooper, Merian C., *Grass*, New York, 1925.

employés, even had it been expedient, would have undone much of the good effect that was wrought by the slow process of education in matters of elementary hygiene. The company, whose administration, and in particular the medical branch, guided by that distinguished and revered figure Dr. M. Y. Young, C.I.E., was from the first guided by motives of genuine goodwill towards the people among whom then were working, not only gave free medical treatment to the families of their staff, but also to all and sundry who applied for it. The policy was not without its risks, for in the early days, so unfamiliar were the patients and their relations with European medical practice, and such were the terrors of hospital treatment, and operations under chloroform, that if a patient died in the hands of the doctors it was apt to be the occasion for a hostile demonstration, and there was always a real danger that a patient, well on the way to recovery, might be removed prematurely, to recover, or perhaps to die, quite unnecessarily in the unsanitary bosom of his affectionate family. Prejudices such as these can be overcome, and have been conquered in S.W. Persia in a measure which is astonishing to those who, like myself, have some knowledge of the depths of ignorance and crass superstition in which the populations of many great Indian cities are sunk—cities that have for a century or more been in close touch with the best European practice, adopted and interpreted by medical men drawn from every caste and

creed. The outcome, in Persia, has been gratifying alike to the population, the Central Government and to the company, for it has served to break down the prejudice—long detrimental to Persia, of the populace against innovations as such. They have seen better things and they approve of them.

Nor has education been neglected: a beginning was made by subsidizing the C.M.S. College at Isfahan, a residential institution, situated in a healthy part of Persia in the heart of the ancient capital, near enough to the virile tribal population to be able to attract the sons of the well-to-do families. Here Persian youths, Muslims for the most part, receive a thorough grounding in Persian, as well as in English, and in elementary science, much on the lines of a well-managed secondary school in England. Simultaneously a certain number of Persian youths, some of whom had graduated at Isfahan and some in the corresponding American Mission College in Tehran, were provided with scholarships to enable them to pursue specific courses of science in England, thus supplementing the generous provision already made by the Persian Government for the education in the principal European countries of the most promising youths. Primary education, too, came in for its share of attention; schools were opened in Abadan and Ahwaz, as well as at Masjid Sulaiman, in suitable buildings, for boys from the age of eight upwards, to learn the three Rs. The teachers are Persians, and the boys learn in their

mother tongue. It is, of course, possible to exaggerate both the extent and the value of these activities: they are important rather as an indication of the spirit in which are being attacked the problems arising from the sudden growth of a community of some twenty thousand wage earners, in the midst of and indeed drawn from an agricultural community which does not number more than 350,000 within a radius (excluding Iraq) of fifty miles of Abadan, Ahwaz and Masjid Sulaiman. Remembering that on the average four persons are dependent on each wage earner, it is an astonishing fact that nearly one person in four in the province of Khuzistan look solely for their daily bread to the oil industry, and probably as many more are indirectly dependent thereon, apart from those Persians in Government employ whose salaries, if they knew it, depend on the oil royalties.

Thus far, it is possible, with perfect truth and in all sincerity, to depict in rosy and indeed glowing colours, the effect in Persia of the development of the oil industry, but there is one aspect which deserves mention, not only in the interests of impartiality, but because to draw attention to a danger is the best way of averting it.

The last five years have witnessed in Persia a rapid growth of the authority of the Central Government in Tehran, and of the power of the Shah; both depend upon the military arm, which is, in effect, the instru-

ment of government throughout the country. There has been a corresponding diminution in the authority of local chiefs. The Bakhtiari Khans no longer control their tribes as they did: their power has been of set purpose undermined. The old Governors-General had their faults, but they were usually men of standing who did not expect to get rich in a hurry and they commanded very general respect, even in the citadel of distant Shushtar. The Shaikh of Mohammerah and his father before him controlled the Arab tribes of the plains with skill, and paid in net revenues to the Persian Government a sum larger than the *net* sum that is left to-day, after paying expenses, from much larger *gross* collections. His place, too, is empty and he has had no successor. Military officers, some of exceptional ability and unquestionable probity, such as Sartip Fazlullah Khan, others of less repute, and indeed at the opposite end of the moral scale, have taken the places of the stately figures of the old regime. They have no prestige except such as is derived from the existence on the spot of a military force, and of the delegated authority of Riza Shah. It behoves them, in such circumstances, to walk warily and to avoid breaking up what is left of local ties, and local loyalties, which, whilst they divide, also unite. The time is not yet when the Persian Government can afford to dispense with the tribal organization; customary law, hereditary inhibitions, marriage ties and personal attachments which, mixed with

a very genuinely democratic system of control, have, in the course of centuries, made of a tribe a living if multi-cellular organism; if it is broken up, and nothing more effective substituted, the individuals composing society will instinctively seek new leaders.

THE END

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